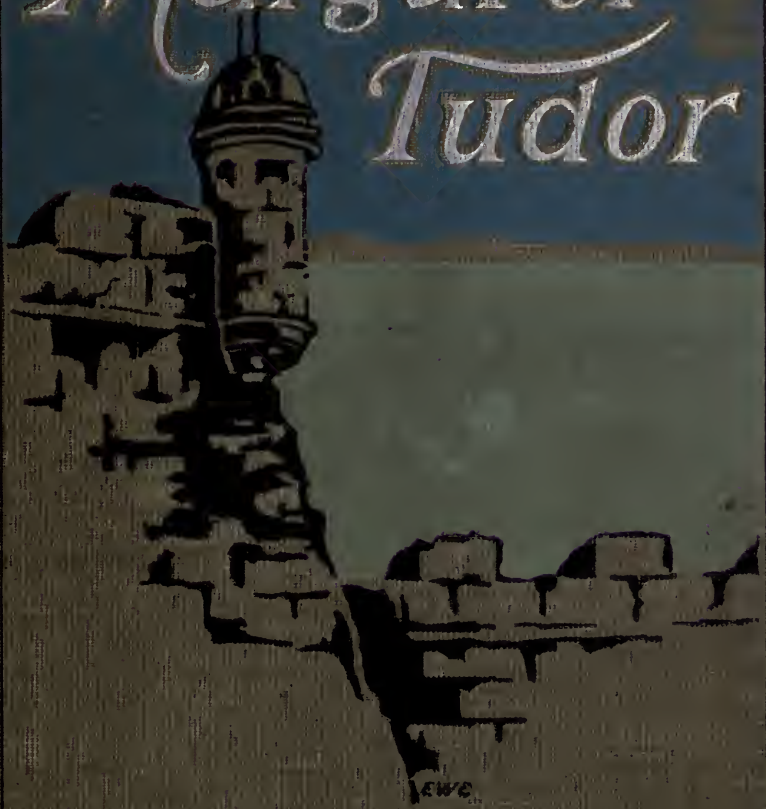
Margaret Tudor



Annie T. Colcock

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

THE STORY OF MARGARET TUDOR

MARGARET TUDOR.

Margaret Tudor

A Romance of Old St. Augustine

By ANNIE T. COLCOCK

Illustrated by
W. B. GILBERT

NEW YORK · Frederick A. Stokes Company · PUBLISHERS

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

Copyright, 1901,
By Frederick A. Stokes Company

All rights reserved

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

"That thee is sent receive in buxomnesse,
The wrastling of this world asketh a fall,
Here is no home, here is but wildernesse,
. . . . . .
Looke up on high, and thanké God of all!"

CHAUCER.

3505
C676m

ALDINE BOOK CO. NOV 25 '42 LIBRARY SETS

NOTE.

The names of Mr. John Rivers,—kinsman and agent of Lord Ashley,—Dr. Wm. Scrivener and Margaret Tudor appear in the passenger list of the *Carolina*, as given in the Shaftesbury Papers (Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society, Vol. V, page 135). In the same (page 169) may be found a brief account of the capture, at Santa Catalina, of Mr. Rivers, Capt. Baulk, some seamen, *a woman, and a girl;* also (page 175) mention of the unsuccessful embassy of Mr. Collins; and (page 204) the Memorial to the Spanish Ambassador touching the delivery of the prisoners, one of whom is alluded to as *Margaret*, presumably Margaret Tudor.

The names of the two Spaniards, Señor de Colis and Don Pedro Melinza, each appear once in the Shaftesbury Papers (pages 25 and 443): the latter individual was evidently a person of some consequence in San Augustin; the former, in the year 1663, was "Governour and Captain-General, Cavallier, and Knight of the Order of St. James."

ANNIE T. COLCOCK.

448050

THE STORY OF MARGARET TUDOR

CHAPTER I.

San Augustin, this 29th of June, Anno Domini 1670.

It is now more than a month since our captivity began, and there seems scant likelihood that it will come to a speedy close,—altho', being in good health myself, and of an age when hope dies slowly, I despair not of recovering both liberty and friends. Yet, in the event of our further detention, of sickness or any other evil that may befall me—and there is one threatening—I write these pages of true history, praying that they may some time reach the hand of my guardian and uncle, Dr. William Scrivener, if he be still alive and dwelling in these parts. Should they chance, instead, to meet the eyes of some friendly-disposed person of English blood and Protestant faith, to whom the name of William Scrivener is unknown, I beseech him to deliver them to any person sailing with the sloop *Three Brothers*, which did set out from the Island of Barbadoes on the 2nd of November last,—being in the hire of Sir Thomas Colleton, and bearing freight and passengers for these shores.

If the sloop has suffered some misadventure (as I fear is not unlikely,—either at the hands of the Spaniards, or else of the Indians of these parts, who do show themselves most unfriendly to all Englishmen, being set on to mischief by the Spanish friars), then I pray that word may be forwarded to his Lordship, the Duke of Albemarle, and others of the Lords Proprietors who did commission and furnish a fleet of three vessels, to wit: the *Carolina*, the *Port Royal*, and the *Albemarle*, which did weigh anchor at the Downs in August of last year, and set forth to plant an English colony at Port Royal.

In particular would I implore that word might reach Lord Ashley, seeing that his kinsman, Mr. John Rivers, is here detained a prisoner in sorry state, laden with chains in the dungeon of the Castle—for which may God forgive me, I being in some degree to blame; and yet, since it hath pleased Heaven to grant me the fair face that wrought the mischief, I hold myself the less guilty and grieve the more bitterly, inasmuch as I love him with a maid's true love and would willingly give my life to spare him hurt.

If it were so that I might give the true narrative of our present plight, and how it fell about, without cumbering the tale with men-

tion of my own name, it would please me best; but as those who read it may be strangers, I would better tell my story from the start.

Of myself it is enough to say that my name is Margaret Tudor, and saving my uncle, Dr. Scrivener, I am alone in the world and well-nigh portionless—my father having spent his all, and life and liberty to boot, in the service of King Charles, being one of those unfortunate royalists who plotted for His Majesty's return in the year '55. For, as Cromwell did discover their designs ere they were fully ripe, many were taken prisoners, of whom some suffered death and others banishment. Of these last was my father, who was torn from the arms of his young wife and babe and sent in slavery to Barbadoes. We could learn nothing of his after fate, though many inquiries were made in his behalf.

And so it fell about that,—my mother having gone to her rest,—I did take passage with my uncle, Dr. William Scrivener, on board the *Carolina*, with intent to stop at Barbadoes and make some search for my poor father in the hope that he yet lived.

Among the passengers of the *Carolina* was Lord Ashley's kinsman and agent, Mr. John Rivers, of whom I can find naught to say that

seems fitting; for although it may hap that in this great world there are other men of a countenance as fine, a mien as noble, and a heart as brave and tender, it has not been my lot as yet to encounter them.

Together we did sail for three months on the great deep, in danger of pirates, in peril of tempests, and in long hours of golden calm when the waters burned blue around us and the wide heaven shone pale and clear over our heads. And in all that time we came to know one another passing well; and Mr. Rivers heard my father's story and promised to aid us in our search.

It was October when we reached Barbadoes and landed. Of the news that we obtained, and the strange chance that brought it to our ears, it is needless here to speak. Let it suffice that my dear father did not suffer long, as death soon freed him from his bondage.

We had no further cause to detain us in Barbadoes, so we yielded to the persuasions of Mr. Rivers that we should continue with the expedition to Port Royal; and, in November, we set sail once more in the *Three Brothers*, a sloop hired to replace the *Albemarle*, which, in consequence of a broken cable, had been driven ashore in a gale and lost upon the rocks.

From now on, for the truth's sake, I must needs tell somewhat of my intercourse with Mr. Rivers. It may seem I am lacking in a proper modesty if I declare that, even then, there was more than friendship betwixt us. But surely there were reasons enough and to spare. That I should love him was no mystery—he being the gallant gentleman he is; and, since there chanced to be no other maid upon the vessel of proper age and gentle condition, I suppose it was in nature that he should make the best of the little society he had. But nay, I would be false to my own faith if I doubted that it was foreordained of Heaven that we should come together and love one another.

It is true that I did not make confession of this belief until I had tormented my would-be lord with every teasing device that entered into my brain. But though he was often cast down for hours together, he gave me to understand that he could read my heart in my blue eyes.

"An you were to swear upon your soul you hated me, dear lady, I'd not believe it," he once said. "Mistress Margaret is too unversed in city ways and shallow coquetries to play a part —and 'tis for that I love her so." And though it angered me to have him praise my innocence and country airs, I knew he spoke the truth, and that a time would come when I would own my love for him. And so it did.

A terrible storm had raged for eight-and-forty hours. There had been wild, black, awful nights, and sullen days when the gray curtains of the sky were torn asunder and whirled over us in inky folds, their tattered fringes lashing up the seas, and whipping our frail bark till it skulked and cowered, like a beaten cur that looks in vain for mercy. We had drifted northward far from our course, our two consorts had disappeared, and we had well-nigh given up hope, when with the dawning of the third day the wind lulled, and through the ragged clouds we saw the blue arch of heaven high above us.

I had climbed out upon the deck alone; and from a sheltered corner I saw the sun rise and gild a far-off strip of shore that lay to west of us. It seemed a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, and I gave God thanks. Then a hand touched mine, and a voice whispered my name—and other words that need not be recorded here; and I could answer nothing in denial, for the reason that my heart was too full.

CHAPTER II.

THE land to west of us was Virginia, and we sought harbour at Nancemund, and lay there some weeks for needful repairs on the sloop, which was also provisioned afresh for her further voyage.

It was then the month of February; we had been six months a-journeying, and still the promised land was far away.

This tale of mine, however, bids fair to spin itself at too great length, so I must hasten on to the story of our captivity.

In spite of fairly good weather on our way southward we somehow over passed the latitude of Port Royal harbour; and of a Saturday in May—the fifteenth day of the month—we did cast anchor at a little isle upon the coast, in order to obtain wood and water for the sloop's needs.

This island is within the territory of the Spaniards, who have named it Santa Catalina. It lies some days' journey north of San Augustin,—the exact latitude I know not, although

I have heard it more times than one ; but there are some things that abide never in a woman's brain.

Here appeared many Indians, who seemed at first not unfriendly, and spoke words of welcome to us in the Spanish tongue.

Much trading was done aboard the sloop, and the barbarians appeared strangely content with strings of paltry beads and the cast-off garments of the crew, giving in their stead good provender, and skins of the wild deer dressed soft and fine.

The second day of our stay, Mr. Rivers, with the ship's master and three seamen, went ashore with such stuff as the Indians desire, to trade for pork and other provisions ; and it being a Monday morn, Dame Barbara did crave leave to take her washing and go with them, in the hope of finding a softer water to cleanse the linen.

It was early morning ; the breeze from the land blew sweet and fragrant, and the woods beyond the sandy beach bourgeoned in new leafage, green and tender. I longed for the scent of the warm earth, and the tuneful courting of bird-lovers in the thicket ; so I prayed my uncle to let me go ashore with the dame. He acceded willingly enough ; but Mr. Rivers, who is always over-anxious where my safety is

concerned, counselled me earnestly not to leave the ship.

I was ever a headstrong maid, and the sunshine and the scent of far-off flowers had set me nearly wild with longing; so I chid him roundly for his caution and merrily warned him to beware how he sought to clip the wings of a free bird. Go I did, therefore, though he smiled and shook his head at me; and when we all parted company at the watering-place he seemed uneasy still, and, looking backward over his shoulder as I waved farewell, entreated me to wander no farther from the shore.

The little spring where they had left us welled up, cold and clear, at the foot of a tall cypress-tree, and trickled thence in a tiny stream, a mere thread of crystal, that tangled itself in the low bush and wound its way helplessly through the level wooded country, as though seeking for some gentle slope that would lead it to the sea.

The dame rinsed her linen till it fairly shone, and spread it out to dry in a sunny nook; while I lay prone on the warm earth and stirred up the damp brown leaves that had drifted into a tiny hollow, and found beneath them a wee green vine with little white star-flowers that blinked up at the sun and me. And I dreamed of the new home we would make for ourselves

in this far country, and of the very good and docile wife I would be to my dear love. Then at last,—because I grew aweary at the prospect of my very great obedience in the future, and because, too, I thought it was high time my gallant gentleman came back to ask me how I did,—up from the ground I started, rousing the dame from a sweet nap.

"Look, Barbara! the linen is dry; the sun is on its westering way, and the shadows grow longer and longer.—'Tis very strange that Mr. Rivers and the master have not returned!"

"Mayhap they have clean forgot us and gone back to the ship alone," moaned the old woman, rubbing her sleepy eyes and beginning at once to croak misfortune, after the manner of her class.

Such an idea was past belief and set me smiling. I laid my hollowed palms behind my ears and listened.

Master Wind, passing through the tree-tops, had set every leaf a-whispering and nid-nodding to its gossips,—just as the peddler on his way through the village at home stirs all the women-folk to chattering about the latest news from the whole countryside. In the thicket beside us a chorus of feathered singers were all a-twitter, each trying to outdo his neighbour; but one saucy fellow piped the merriest tune

of all, mingling in a delicious medley the sweetest notes of all the rest. Of a sudden, as I listened, there was a soft rustle in the undergrowth, and out from a clump of myrtles bounced a little brown rabbit, who cocked an astonished eye at me and disappeared again with a series of soundless leaps and a terrified whisk of his little white tail. Upon that the laugh in my throat bubbled over; I dropped my hands and turned to the dame.

"Gather up your linen, good Barbara, and let us explore the trail ourselves. They are doubtless picnicking somewhere in the woods beyond, and 'tis very discourteous not to bid us to the entertainment."

She would have demurred at first: the linen was not to be left, and yet was too weighty to carry; her back was aweary and she was fain to rest in peace. But Mistress Margaret was minded to have her own way, and, dividing the bundle in two, started on ahead with the larger share of it; so that, will she, nill she, the dame must follow.

I knew, of course, that I was disobeying Mr. Rivers' last injunction, and 'twas that thought quite as much as the sweet woodland airs that lured me on: I desired, above all things, to behold the countenance of my gallant gentleman when he discovered my wilfulness. So

I hastened forward, pausing now and again to encourage the good dame and entice her still farther with glowing descriptions of new beauties just coming into view.

It fell about, therefore, that I was some forty paces in advance of her when I suddenly came upon the Indian settlement and saw there a sight that made my heart stand still.

I drew back hastily behind the trunk of a wide-branched oak, whence I could look—unseen, I thought—upon the town.

A great concourse of barbarians was assembled in the open space before the chief building, which was of considerable size, built round after the manner of a dove-house, and completely thatched with palmetto leaves. Many smaller buildings surrounded it: one, in especial, I would have done well to take note of; for it was doubtless a kind of sentinel or watch-tower, being set on tall, upright timbers which gave it an elevation much greater than any part of the surrounding country.

I had eyes for naught, however, but one figure, that stood, with hands and feet bound, at the foot of a great wooden cross planted opposite the entrance of the chief building. It was my dear love—I knew him on the instant by the proud poise of his head and shoulders. He was speaking in his usual calm

and courtly tones to the circle of half-naked savages, who seemed to hear him with respectful consideration, though they made no motion to loose his bonds.

On the ground beside him lay the ship's master, old Captain Baulk, and the three seamen, their arms securely pinioned. Near them was the bale of goods which had been brought from the ship: it lay wide open, and was being most unscrupulously rifled of its contents.

For the moment I thought it was the sight of the gewgaws this bale contained that had roused the cupidity of the barbarians; but now I believe otherwise. The savages would have paid for them willingly, in skins and such like, and then suffered our men to depart in peace, had not that smooth-tongued hypocrite, Ignacio, been behind. But this, of course, was unknown to me at the time.

The idea came over me, like a flash, that we should go for help to the ship; and I turned quickly and signalled the dame to be silent. It was too late, however, for she had caught sight of the savages and of our men bound in the midst of them; and turning to the right about with a shrill scream, she cast away the bundle of linen and started back the way we had come at a speed which 'tis likely she had

never equalled in her life before. After her I hastened, and implored her to be still, lest the barbarians should hear and overtake us. My one thought was to summon aid; for, though there seemed to be over two hundred of the Indians, I believed that our handful of men, armed with muskets, swords, and pikes, would be sufficient to strike terror into them at once.

We had scarce run an hundred yards down the trail when four savages stepped from a thicket and laid hands upon us. They had lain in wait, there is no doubt, so 'twas evident we had been seen some while before.

Barbara resisted them with much wild shrieking, but I submitted in silence. 'Twas not that I was any braver than she, but simply that I could not believe that they meant to do us any real harm; and all the while I was possessed with the thought that there was some one stationed in the thicket who was directing the actions of the savages. It appeared to me that, as they fastened our arms behind us, their eyeballs rolled ever toward a certain myrtle-bush, as if they were waiting for a cue.

We were led back at once to the town, and I shall never forget the look upon my dear love's face as he caught sight of me.

"Margaret—you also! I had hoped you and the dame were safe!" he cried out, as our captors led us to his side.

"'Twas all my wilfulness—I came hither seeking you," I answered, and hung my head.

He looked at me dumbly, and then turned his face away; and I saw his arms writhing in their bonds. A strange feeling came upon me, part shame and sorrow that I should have grieved him so, and part exultation that—whatever our fate—at least we would meet it side by side. Fear had the least place in my thoughts as I waited, breathless, for the outcome of this strange situation. My eyes wandered round the circle of barbarians, and I noted with some wonderment that numbers of the men wore their crowns shaven, after the manner of a priest's tonsure.

One among them, who seemed of greater consequence than the rest, began to speak; but I could make nothing of his discourse, although he used many words that I thought had somewhat of a Spanish ring.

Yet his meaning was fathomed by Mr. Rivers, who gave him the reply on the instant, couched in the Spanish, and delivered with some heat and indignation

There was a stir among the barbarians, and presently there appeared a new figure on the

scene. The shaven crown, the bare feet, the coarse woollen robe fastened by a knotted cord about the waist, all denoted a friar of the Franciscan order.

"So," muttered Mr. Rivers, under his breath, "now we have the real chief to deal with."

Scarcely less swarthy than the Indians themselves was the dark face of the Spanish friar. As he came forward into the open space, he raised his eyes to the great cross at the foot of which we were standing, and straightway bent the knee and crossed himself. Some few of the Indians likewise made the sign upon their breasts, though the greater part contained themselves with the same stolidity that had marked them from the first.

Mr. Rivers gave a low laugh, and turned to me with a curling lip. "These be Christians," he said.

The Spaniard caught the sneer, and a scowl gathered on his coarse face; but he checked it suddenly and began in smooth tones to address us.

Old Captain Baulk had raised himself to a sitting posture, and the seamen all held themselves in attitudes of strained attention.

"What says he?" I asked, in a whisper, of my dear love, when the friar had ceased and turned away from us.

"Naught but a tissue of lies," exclaimed Mr. Rivers, through his clenched teeth. "He would have us believe that he is wholly irresponsible for the doings of these 'banditos'; but he will exert what influence he has among the believers of his flock to procure our release,—I would we had fallen among infidels! These can have learned naught of their teacher but deceit. They tricked us, on the plea of our most mutual confidence, to lay aside our arms, and then fell instantly upon us and made us captive."

"I would to Heaven I could have gone back to the ship and given warning," I sighed dolefully. "Yet perhaps some of them may come out to search for us."

"Now God forbid!" exclaimed Mr. Rivers, "for they would walk into a trap. Some of these Indians have muskets and ammunition, and are therefore as well armed as our men. If many more of us were taken there would not be left able-bodied men enough to sail the sloop. 'Twould be better if they held off and waited for the Indians to take the initiative. My hope is that we will be able to treat with the savages for ransom,—that is, if the friar bears us no real ill will. See, here he comes again, with his oily tongue."

The shifty eyes and full-lipped mouth of the

man filled me with a sudden loathing. Fear began to take hold of me at last, and a little sob broke in my throat.

My dear love turned to me with a quick, warm glance.

"Cheer up, sweetheart," he whispered. "It is too soon to lose courage. Come, where is my brave Margaret?"

"Here!" I answered, and forced a smile on my quivering lips.

CHAPTER III.

THE rest of the day passed by like a long nightmare. The friar had us removed to a small but strongly built hut, containing two rooms, separated by a thin partition of hides nailed to a row of upright studs. These were of squared timber, as was the floor also, and the outer frame and wall-plate. The roof and sides were overlaid with thatch; and there was no window, only a square opening in the roof which admitted the light, and also let out the smoke when a fire was built upon the floor.

As dark came on, two young Indian girls entered the hut, where we sat, bound, with our backs against the wall.

They seemed kindly disposed and gentle-mannered, for all their outlandish garb, which consisted of a petticoat of long gray moss, and strings of little shells and beads of divers colours festooned about the neck.

They loosed Barbara and me, for which we were mightily grateful, as our arms had grown numb and sore. We made signs that they

should cut the bonds of the men also, which they declined to do. Yet they touched us with gentle hands, and stroked our shoulders in token of their good will.

After this they brought wet clay and spread it upon the floor, and on this laid a fire and kindled it; going forth again, they returned with food and set it before us, making signs that we who were free should feed the rest.

While I was serving my dear love—who made pitiable pretence of enjoying my ministrations—the friar entered the hut, accompanied by two others who were doubtless of mixed Spanish and Indian blood.

They bore with them heavy manacles and chains, which they fastened upon our men, cutting the leathern thongs which had held them until now.

Mr. Rivers demanded to know by whose orders this was done.

"For it would seem our true jailers are not the Indians. These fetters are of Spanish forging. Is it to your nation, padre, we are indebted for this urgent hospitality?"

To this the friar made answer at great length, and what he said appeared to enrage our men, who broke forth in a round volley of oaths as soon as our jailers had left the hut. I turned to Mr. Rivers for explanation.

"'Tis as I supposed," he said, "and the friar is at the bottom of it all. He maintains now that in landing here and attempting to trade with the Indians we have committed an offence against the sovereignty of Santo Domingo, which claims all this coast as Spanish territory. These Indians, he declares, are under the protection of his government, and therefore are not free to dispose of any goods to us English, or to receive any favours at our hands; as such dealings would be to the prejudice of the Spanish rights and influence over this country. Therefore he has claimed us from the Indians and proposes himself to hold us prisoners, awaiting the decision of the Governor at San Augustin."

As I look back now, it seems to me that in those first hours of our captivity I grew older by many years. That gladsome morning, with its wilful moods and joyous daring, fell away back into the past, and seemed as unreal as the day-dreams of my childhood.

We slept that night, Dame Barbara and I, upon a soft and springy couch of moss piled in the little inner room. That is to say, we lay there silently; but I think I scarce closed my eyes.

The wind, drifting through the gaping thatch, caught the loose corner of a shrivelled

strip of hide dangling on the rude partition wall, and kept it swinging back and forth, with a faint tap-tap, tap-tap, the whole night long. As it swung outward I could catch fleeting glimpses of the little group huddled about the dying fire; and for hours I lay and listened to the low murmur of their voices and the heavy clank and rattle of their chains.

Old Captain Baulk was in a garrulous mood, and he poured into the sailors' ears a horrid tale of how the Spaniards had massacred the first French settlers on this coast.

"'Twas just about one hundred years ago," he droned in a gruesome whisper. "Ribault's settlement was on the River May, somewhere in these latitudes. There were about nine hundred of them in all, 'tis said, counting the women and children; and not one of them escaped. The bodies of dead and wounded were alike hung upon a tree for the crows——"

"In God's name, hold your croaking tongue!" Mr. Rivers broke in angrily. "'Tis bad enough for the women as things are, and if they overhear these old wives' tales, think you it will make them rest easier?"

"Not old wives' tales, Mr. Rivers, but the fact, sir,—the bloody fact."

"Silence!" whispered my betrothed, in a voice that made me tremble,—for he hath a

hot temper when it is roused. "Unless thou canst hold that ill-omened tongue of thine, there presently will be another bloody fact between thy teeth!"

A sudden silence fell. 'Twas broken finally by my dear love, whose generous nature soon repented of a harshly spoken word.

"I was over-hasty, my good Baulk; but I would not for the world have Mistress Tudor hear aught of those horrors. And times have changed greatly in an hundred years. But this inaction, this inaction! 'Tis terrible upon a man!"

A suppressed groan accompanied the exclamation, and my heart ached for him. It must indeed be hard for men—who are used to carving their own fates and wresting from fortune their desires—suddenly to be forced to play the woman's part of patient waiting.

The next day brought no relief.

From the windowless hut we could see naught of what passed without; but about an hour before noon we heard a drum beat in the village. The sound grew ever fainter, as though receding; then came the distant report of musketry, and we grew anxious for our people on the sloop. Hours passed by, and again came the sound of heavy firing, which gradually died away as before.

Late in the afternoon we were joined by another prisoner, whom—from his dress of skins—we mistook at first sight for a young Indian; but 'twas no other than the lad Poole, who was in Mr. Rivers's service and most loyally attached to his master.

From him we learned that the Indians and some Spaniards had been parleying with our men all day. He had swum ashore with a letter to the friar, and had been received with kindness by the savages, who clad him after their own fashion. The friar, however, vouchsafed him no reply; and after a time gave a signal to his men to fire on the sloop. The arrows of the Indians and the muskets of the Spaniards had finally compelled the *Three Brothers* to weigh anchor and put out to sea.

CHAPTER IV.

Day after day dragged by. We grew aweary of discussing the possibilities of our escape and fell gradually into silence.

It was on the first day of June that Don Pedro de Melinza arrived in the galley from San Augustin, and our captivity took on a new phase.

He is a handsome man, this Spanish Don, and he bears himself with the airs of a courtier —when it so pleases him. As he stood that day at the open door of our hut prison, in the full glow of the summer morning, he was a goodly sight. His thick black hair was worn in a fringe of wavy locks that rested lightly on his flaring collar. His leathern doublet fitted close to his slight, strong figure, and through its slashed sleeves there was a shimmer of fine silk. In his right hand he held his plumed sombrero against his breast; his left rested carelessly on the hilt of his sword.

I could find no flaw in his courteous greetings; but I looked into his countenance and liked it not.

The nose was straight and high, the keen dark eyes set deep in the olive face; but beneath the short, curled moustache projected a full, red under lip.

Show me, in a man, an open brow, a clear eye, a firm-set mouth, and a chin that neither aims to meet the nose nor lags back upon the breast; and I will dub him honest, and brave, and clean-minded. But if his forehead skulks backward, his chin recedes, and his nether lip curls over redly—though the other traits be handsome, and the figure full of grace and strength controlled—trust that man I never could! Such an one I saw once in my early childhood. My mother pointed him out to me and bade me note him well.

"That man," she said, "was once your father's friend and close comrade; yet now he walks free and lives in ease, while my poor husband is in slavery. Why is it thus? Because he over yonder was false to his oath, to his friends, and to his king. He sold them all, like Esau, for a mess of pottage. Mark him well, my child, and beware of his like; for in these days they are not a few, and woe to any who trust in them!"

I remembered those words of my mother when the Señor Don Pedro de Melinza y de Colis made his bow to us that summer's day.

The meaning of his courtly phrases was lost upon me; but I gathered from his manner that he had come in the guise of a friend,— and I trembled at the prospect of such friendship.

Nevertheless I was right glad when the fetters were struck from my dear love and his companions, and we were taken upon the Spanish galley and served like Christians.

At the earliest opportunity Mr. Rivers hastened to make things clear to me. "Our deliverer"— so he termed him, whereat I marvelled somewhat,—" our deliverer assures me that Padre Ignacio's action is condemned greatly by his uncle, Señor de Colis, the Governor and Captain-General at San Augustin. Don Pedro has been sent to transport us thither, where we will be entertained with some fitness until we can communicate with our friends."

"Says he so? 'Twill be well if he keeps his word; but to my thinking he has not the face of an honest man."

Mr. Rivers looked at me gravely. "That is a hard speech from such gentle lips," he said. "Don Pedro is a Spanish gentleman of high lineage. His uncle, Señor de Colis, is a knight of the Order of St. James. Such hold their honour dear. Until he gives us cause to

distrust him, let us have the grace to believe that he *is* an honest man."

I looked back into the frank gray eyes of my true and gallant love, and I felt rebuked. 'Twas a woman's instinct, only, that made me doubt the Spaniard; and this simple trust of a noble nature in the integrity of his fellow man seemed a vastly finer instinct than my own.

From that moment I laid by my suspicions, and met the courteous advances of Señor de Melinza with as much of graciousness as I knew how. But, as we spoke for the most part in different tongues, little conversation was possible to us.

I marvelled at the ease with which Mr. Rivers conversed in both Spanish and French. Of the latter I was not wholly ignorant myself,—although in my quiet country life I had had little opportunity of putting my knowledge to the test, seldom attempting to do more than "prick in some flowers" of foreign speech upon the fabric of my mother tongue; so it was with great timidity that I essayed at first to thread the mazes of an unfamiliar language.

The Spaniard, however, greeted my attempts with courteous comprehension, and after a time I was emboldened to ask some

questions concerning the town of San Augustin, and to comment upon the vivid beauty of the skies and the blue waves around us. Upon that he broke into rapturous praises of his own land of Spain—"the fairest spot upon the earth!" As I listened, smilingly, it seemed to me that I perceived a shadow gathering upon the brow of my dear love.

So far the galley had depended solely upon her oars—of which there were six banks, of two oars each, on either side,—but now, the wind having freshened, Don Pedro ordered her two small lateen sails to be hoisted. While he was giving these directions and superintending their fulfilment, Mr. Rivers drew closer to my side, saying, in a rapid whisper:

"You have somewhat misread me, sweetheart, in regard to your demeanour toward our host. 'Tis surely needless for you to put yourself to the pain of conversing with him at such length."

Now it must be remembered that in the last few hours our situation had greatly changed. I had left a dark and dirty hovel for a cushioned couch upon a breezy deck. In the tiny cabin which had been placed at my disposal, I had, with Barbara's aid, rearranged my tangled locks and my disordered clothing; so that I

was no longer ashamed of my untidy appearance. With my outward transformation there had come a reaction in my spirits, which bounded upward to their accustomed level.

The salt air was fresh upon my cheek; the motion of our vessel, careening gaily on the dancing waves, was joyous and inspiring. I forgot that we were sailing southward, and that, if our English friends had survived to begin their intended settlement, we were leaving them farther and farther behind. My thoughts went back to the earlier days of our journey over seas; and a flash of the wilful mischief, which I thought had all died from my heart, rose suddenly within me.

I leaned back upon my cushioned seat and looked with half-veiled eyes at my gallant gentleman.

"These nice distinctions, Mr. Rivers, are too difficult for me," I said. "If this Spanish cavalier of high lineage and honest intentions is worthy of any gratitude, methinks a few civil words can scarcely overpay him."

A heightened colour in the cheek of my betrothed testified to the warmth of his feelings in the matter, as he replied:

"You are wholly in the right, my dearest lady! If civil words can cancel aught of our indebtedness I shall not be sparing of them.

Nevertheless, permit me, I entreat you, to assume the entire burden of our gratitude and the whole payment thereof."

"Not so," I rejoined, with some spirit. "Despite our beggared fortunes, I trust no one has ever found a Tudor bankrupt in either courtesy or gratitude; and—by your leave, sir—I will be no exception!"

This I said, not because I was so mightily beholden to the Spaniard; but—shame upon me!—because Mr. Rivers had chosen to reprove me, a while since, for my uncharity.

'Tis passing strange how we women can find pleasure in giving pain to the man we love; while if he suffered from any other cause we would gladly die to relieve him! 'Twould seem a cruel trait in a woman's character—and I do trust that I am not cruel! But I must admit that when I greeted Don Pedro, on his return, with added cordiality, it was nothing in his dark, eager countenance that set my heart beating—but rather the glimpse I had caught of a bitten lip, a knotted brow, and a pair of woeful gray eyes gazing out to sea.

Repentance came speedily, however. There was that in the Spaniard's manner that aroused my sleeping doubts of him; and I soon fell silent and sought to be alone.

My gallant gentleman had withdrawn himself in a pique, and, in the company of old Captain Baulk and the lad Poole, seemed to have wholly forgotten my existence.

I made Dame Barbara sit beside me, and, feigning headache, leaned my head upon her shoulder and closed my eyes. The dame rocked herself gently to and fro, and from time to time gave vent to smothered prayers and doleful ejaculations that set my thoughts working upon my own misdoings.

Through my half-shut eyes I saw the sun go down behind the strip of shore, and watched the blue skies pale to faintest green and richest amber. A little flock of white cloudlets, swimming in the transparent depths, caught fire suddenly and changed to pink flames, then glowed darkly red like burning coals, and faded, finally to gray ashes in the purpling west.

"Lord, have mercy on our sinful hearts!" groaned Dame Barbara softly.

"Amen!" I sighed, and wondered what ailed mine, that it could be so very wicked as to add to the burden of anxiety that my dear love had to bear! A few tears stole from under my half-closed lids, and I was very miserable and forlorn, when suddenly I felt a hand laid upon mine.

I looked up hastily, and saw the face of my gallant gentleman, very grave and penitent, in the fast-deepening twilight. My heart gave a glad leap within my bosom; but I puckered my lips woefully and heaved a mighty sigh.

"Thank you, dear Dame, for your kind nursing," I said to Barbara. "Truly, I know not what I should do without your motherly comforting at times."

Mr. Rivers took my hand, and drew me gently away, saying:

"See what a bright star hangs yonder, above the sombre shores!"

I glanced at the glittering point of light, and then, over my shoulder, at the shadowy decks. The Spaniard was not in sight, and only the bent figure of the dame was very near.

My dear love raised my fingers to his lips. "Forgive me, sweetheart, for being so churlish—but you cannot know the fears that fill me when I see that man's dark face gazing into yours, and realize that we are utterly in his power."

"Surely he would not harm me!" I said, hastily.

"'Tis that he may learn to love you," said Mr. Rivers gravely.

"He may spare himself the pain of it!" I

cried. "Have you not told him that we are betrothed?"

"Aye, love—but he may lose his heart in spite of that. What wonder if he does? The miracle would be if he could look upon your face unmoved."

"Am I so wondrous pretty, then?"

"Fairer than any woman living!" he declared. I knew well enough it was a tender falsehood, but since he seemed to believe it himself it was every whit as satisfactory as if it had been truth!

"Be comforted," I whispered, reassuringly. "I know very well how to make myself quite homely. I have only to pull all my curls back from my brow and club them behind: straightway I will become so old and ugly that no man would care to look me twice in the face. Wait till to-morrow, and you will see!"

A laugh broke from Mr. Rivers's lips, and then he sighed heavily.

"Nay, sweetheart, if it be the head-dress you assumed one day some months ago for my peculiar punishment, I pray you will not try its efficacy on the Spaniard; for it serves but to make you the more irresistible."

But already I have dwelt longer upon myself and my own feelings than is needful for the telling of my tale. I must hasten on to

those happenings that more nearly concerned Mr. Rivers. Yet, in looking backward, I find it hard to tear my thoughts from the memory of that last hour of quiet converse with my dear love, under the starlit southern skies. How seldom we realize our moments of great happiness until after they have slipped away! It seemed to me then that we were in the shadow of a dark-winged host of fears; but now I know that it served only to make our mutual faith burn the more brightly.

I did not, thereafter, neglect Mr. Rivers's warning, and avoided the Spaniard as much as possible. My dear love lingered always at my elbow, and replied for me, in easy Spanish, to all the courteous speeches of Don Pedro.

Sometimes I think it would have been far better had he left me to follow my own course. There are some men who need only a hint of rivalry to spur them on where of their own choice they had never thought to adventure. Melinza's attentions did not diminish, while his manner toward Mr. Rivers lost in cordiality as time went on.

CHAPTER V.

AMONG the Spaniard's followers was a young mulatto whom he called "Tomas." Very tall and slight of figure was he, yet sinewy and strong, with corded muscles twining under the brown skin of his lean young limbs. He wore a loose shirt, open at the throat, with sleeves uprolled to the shoulder; and his short, full trousers reached barely to the knee.

I was admiring the agile grace of the lad as he bestirred himself upon the deck the last morning of our voyage. With him young Poole (clothed once more like a Christian, in borrowed garments) was engaged in the task of shifting a great coil of rope; and the sturdy, fair-skinned English youth was a pretty contrast to the other.

Don Pedro was standing near to Mr. Rivers and myself, and his eyes took the same direction as our own.

"They are well matched in size," said he, pointing to the lads. "Let us see which can bear off the palm for strength." He called out a few words in Spanish to the young mulatto, who

448050

raised his dark head—curled over with shiny rings of coal-black hair—and showed a gleaming row of white teeth as he turned his smiling face toward his master.

Mr. Rivers spoke a word to Poole, and the boy blushed from brow to neck, and his blue eyes fell sheepishly; but he stood up against the other with a right good will, and there was not a hair's difference in their height.

At a signal from Don Pedro the lads grappled with each other; the brown and ruddy limbs were close entwined, and with bare feet gripping the decks they swayed back and forth like twin saplings caught in a gale.

In the first onset the mulatto had the best of it; his lithe dark limbs coiled about his adversary with paralyzing force: but soon the greater weight of the English youth began to tell; his young, well-knit figure straightened and grew tense.

I saw a sudden snarl upon the other's upturned face. His short, thick upper lip curled back upon his teeth as a dog's will when in anger. He rolled his eyes in the direction of his master, who threw him a contemptuous curse. Stung into sudden rage, the mulatto thrust forth his head and sank his sharp white teeth in the shoulder of young Poole.

There was a startled cry, and the English youth loosened his grasp. In another moment the two figures rolled upon the deck, and the flaxen head was undermost.

"Foul play!" cried Mr. Rivers, springing forward to tear the lads apart; for now the mulatto's fingers were at his opponent's throat.

Melinza's hand flew to his sword; with a volley of oaths he interposed the shining blade between Mr. Rivers and the writhing figures on the floor. Quick as thought another blade flashed from its sheath, and the angerful gray eyes of my betrothed burned in indignant challenge.

I had looked on in dumb amaze; but at the sight of the naked weapons I screamed aloud.

Instantly the two men seemed to recollect themselves. They drew back and eyed each other coldly.

"*Hasta conveniente ocasion, caballero!*" said the Spaniard, returning his sword to its scabbard, and bowing low.

"*A la disposicion de vuestra señoria, Don Pedro,*" replied my betrothed, following his example.

And I, listening, but knowing no word of the language, believed that an apology had passed between them!

The scuffle on the deck had ceased when the swords clashed forth, and the lads had risen to their feet. Melinza turned now to young Tomas and struck him a sharp blow on the cheek.

"Away with you both!" said the gesture of his impatient arm; but I believe his tongue uttered naught but curses.

All of our English had appeared upon the deck, and when Melinza strode past them with a scowl still upon his brow they exchanged meaning glances. Captain Baulk shook his grizzled head as he approached us.

"What have I always said, Mr. Rivers"—— he began; but my betrothed looked toward me and laid a finger on his lip. Afterward they drew apart and conversed in whispers. What they said, I never knew; for when Mr. Rivers returned to my side he spoke of naught but the dolphins sporting in the blue waters, and the chances of our reaching San Augustin ere nightfall.

"So," I thought, "I am no longer to be a sharer in their discussions, in their hopes or fears. I am but a very child, to be watched over and amused, to be wiled away from danger with a sweetmeat or a toy! And truly, I have deserved to be treated thus. But

now 'tis time for me to put away childish things and prove myself a woman."

I had the wit, however, not to make known my resolutions, nor to insist on sharing his confidence. I leaned over the vessel's side and watched the silver flashing of the two long lines of oars as they cut the waves, and I held my peace. But in my heart there was tumult. I had seen the glitter of a sword held in my dear love's face!—and I grew cold at the memory. I had coquetted with the man whose sword it was!—and that thought sent hot surges over my whole body. I shut my eyes and wished God had made them less blue; I bit my lip because it was so red. I had not thought, till now, that my fair face might bring danger on my beloved.

He stood at my side, so handsome and so debonair; a goodly man to look upon and a loyal heart to trust; not over-fervent in matters of religion, yet never soiling his lips with a coarse oath, or his honour with a lie! As I glanced up at him, and he bent down toward me, I suddenly recalled the disloyal caution of our father Abraham when he journeyed in the land of strangers; and I thought: "Surely must God honour a man who is true to his love at any cost of danger!"

So passed the day.

It was evening when we crossed the bar and entered Matanzas Bay. The setting sun cast a crimson glow over the waters; I thought of the blood of the French martyrs that once stained these waves, and I shuddered.

Outlined against the western sky was the town of San Augustin,—square walls and low, flat roofs built along a low, green shore. The watch-tower of the castle fort rose up in menace as we came nearer.

Upon the deck of the Spanish galley, hand in hand, stood my love and I.

"Yonder is——our destination," said Mr. Rivers.

"Our prison, you would say," I answered him, "and so I think also. Nevertheless, I would rather stand here, at your side, than anywhere else in this wide world—*alone!*"

He smiled and raised my fingers to his lips. "Verily, dear lady, so would I also."

There was a rattle of heavy chains, and a loud plash as the anchor slipped down in the darkening waters.

CHAPTER VI.

WE were received by the Spanish Governor immediately after our landing.

I had already pictured him, in my thoughts, as a man of commanding presence, with keen, dark eyes set in a stern countenance; crisp, curling locks—such as Melinza's—but silvered lightly on the temples; an air of potency, of fire, as though his bold spirit defied the heavy hand of time.

'Twas therefore a matter of great surprise to me—and some relief—when, instead, I beheld advancing toward us a spare little figure with snow-white hair and a pallid face. His small blue eyes blinked upon us with a watery stare; his flabby cheeks were seamed with wrinkles, and his tremulous lips twitched and writhed in the shadowy semblance of a smile: there was naught about him to suggest either the soldier or the man of parts.

He was attired with some pretension, in a doublet of purple velvet with sleeves of a lighter color. His short, full trousers were garnished at the knee with immense roses;

his shrunken nether limbs were cased in silken hose of a pale lavender hue, and silver buckles fastened the tufted purple ribbons on his shoes. On his breast was the red cross of St. James—patent of nobility; had it not been for that and his fine attire he might have passed for a blear-eyed and decrepit tailor from Haberdashery Lane.

I plucked up heart at the sight of this little manikin.

"Can this be the Governor and Captain-General of San Augustin?" I whispered in the ear of my betrothed.

"'Tis not at the court of *our* Charles only that kissing, or promotion, goes by favour!" was his answer, in a quick aside. Then he met the advancing dignitary and responded with grave punctilio to the suave welcome that was accorded us.

Melinza's part was that of master of ceremonies on this occasion. He appeared to have laid aside his rancour, and his handsome olive countenance was lightened with an expression of great benignance when he presented me to the Governor as—"*the honourable and distinguished señorita Doña Margarita de Tudor.*"

I looked up at Mr. Rivers with an involuntary smile.

"My betrothed, your Excellency," he said simply, taking me by the hand.

The blear-eyed Governor made me a compliment, with a wrinkled hand upon his heart. I understood no word of it, and he spoke no French, so Mr. Rivers relieved the situation with his usual ease.

This audience had been held in the court-yard of the castle, which is a place of great strength,—being, in effect, a square fort built of stone, covering about an acre of ground, and garrisoned by more than three hundred men.

We stood in a little group beneath a dim lamp that hung in a carved portico which appeared to be the entrance to a chapel. Captain Baulk and the rest were a little aloof from us; and all around, at the open doors of the casemates, lurked many of the swarthy soldiery.

Suddenly light footsteps sounded on the flagged pavement of the chapel in our rear, and a tall, graceful woman stepped forth and laid her hand upon my shoulder. Through the delicate folds of black, filmy lace veiling her head and shoulders gleamed a pair of luminous eyes that burned me with their gaze.

She waved aside the salutations of the two Spaniards and spoke directly to me in a rich,

low voice. The sight of a woman was so welcome to me that I held out both hands in eager response; but she made no move to take them: her bright eyes scanned the faces of our party, lingering on that of my betrothed, to whom she next addressed herself, with a little careless gesture of her white hand in my direction.

Mr. Rivers bowed low, and said, in French: "Madame, I commend her to your good care." Then to me: "Margaret, the Governor's lady offers you the protection of her roof."

His eyes bade me accept it, and I turned slowly to the imperious stranger and murmured: "Madame, I thank you."

"So! she exclaimed, "you can speak, then? You are not dumb? I had thought it was a pretty waxen effigy of Our Lady, for the padre here," and she laughed mockingly, with a glance over her shoulder.

Another had joined our group, but his bare feet had sounded no warning tread. The sight of the coarse habit and the tonsured head struck a chill through me. Two sombre eyes held mine for a moment, then their owner turned silently away and re-entered the chapel door.

Melinza was standing by, with a gathering frown on his forehead.

"Such condescension on your part, Doña Orosia, is needless. We can provide accommodations for all our English guests here in the castle."

"What! Would Don Pedro stoop to trick out a lady's boudoir?—Nay, she would die of the horrors within these gloomy walls. Come with me, child, I can furnish better entertainment."

I turned hastily toward my dear love.

"Go!" said his eyes to me.

Then I thought of Barbara, and very timidly I asked leave to keep her by me.

"She may follow us," said the Governor's lady carelessly, and sharply clapped her hands. Two runners appeared, bearing a closed chair, and set it down before us.

"Enter," said my self-elected guardian. "You are so slight there is room for us both."

In dazed fashion I obeyed her, and then she followed me.

I thought I should be crushed in the narrow space, and the idea of being thus suddenly torn away from my betrothed filled me with terror. I made a desperate effort to spring out again; but a soft, strong hand gripped my arm and held me still, and in a moment we were borne swiftly away from the courtyard into the dark without.

I wrung my hands bitterly, and burst into tears.

"*O cielos!* what have we here?" cried the rich voice, petulantly. "'Tis not a waxen saint, after all, but a living fountain! Do not drown me, I pray you. What is there to weep for? Art afraid, little fool? See, I am but a woman, not an ogress."

But 'twas not alone for myself that I feared: the thought of my dear love in Melinza's power terrified me more than aught else,—yet I dared not put my suspicions into words. I tried hard to control my voice as I implored that I might be taken back to the fort and to Mr. Rivers.

"Is it for the Englishman, or Melinza, that you are weeping?" demanded my companion sharply.

"Madame!" I retorted, with indignation, "Mr. Rivers is my betrothed husband."

"Good cause for affliction, doubtless," she replied, "but spare me your lamentations. Nay, you may *not* return to the fort. 'Tis no fit place for an honest woman,—and you seem too much a fool to be aught else. Here, we have arrived——"

She pushed me out upon the unpaved street, then dragged me through an open doorway, across a narrow court filled with blooming

plants, and into a lighted room furnished with rich hangings, and chairs, tables, and cabinets of fine workmanship.

I gazed around me in wonder and confusion of mind.

"How does it please your pretty saintship? 'Tis something better than either Padre Ignacio's hut or Melinza's galley, is it not? Are you content to remain?"

"Madame," I said desperately, "do with me what you will; only see, I pray you, that my betrothed comes to no harm."

"What should harm him," she demanded. "Is he not the guest of my husband?"

"His guest, madame, or his prisoner?"

She gave me a keen glance. "Whichever rôle he may have the wit—or the folly—to play."

I wrung my hands again. "Madame, madame, do not trifle with me!"

"Child, what should make thee so afraid?"

I hesitated, then exclaimed: "Señor de Melinza bears him no good will—he may strive to prejudice your husband!"

The Governor's wife looked intently at me. "Why should Melinza have aught against your Englishman?"

I could not answer,—perhaps I had been a fool to speak. I dropped my face in my hands, silently.

Doña Orosia leaned forward and took me by the wrists. "Look at me!" she said.

Timidly I raised my eyes, and she studied my countenance for a long minute.

"'Tis absurd," she said then, and pushed me aside. "'Tis impossible! And yet——a new face, a new face and passably pretty. Oh, my God, these men! are they worth one real heart pang? Tell me," she cried, fiercely, and shook me roughly by the shoulder, "has Melinza made love to you already?"

"Never, madame, never!" I answered quickly, frightened by her vehemence. "Indeed, their quarrel did not concern me. 'Twas about two lads that had a wrestling-match upon the galley. And although they were both angered at the time, there may be no ill feeling between them now. I was foolish to speak of it. Forget my imprudence, I pray you!"

But her face remained thoughtful. "Tell me the whole story," she said; and when I had done so she was silent.

I sat and watched her anxiously. She was a beautiful woman, with a wealth of dark hair, a richly tinted cheek, glorious eyes, and a small, soft, red-lipped, passionate mouth—folded close, at that moment, in a scornful curve.

Suddenly she rose and touched a bell. A young negress answered the summons. Doña Orosia spoke a few rapid words to her in Spanish, then turned coldly to me.

"Go with her; she will show you to your apartment, and your woman will attend you there later on. You must be too weary to-night to join us at a formal meal, and your wardrobe must be somewhat in need of replenishing. To-morrow you shall have whatever you require. I bid you goodnight!"—and she dismissed me with a haughty gesture of her white hand.

The chamber that had been assigned to me—which I was glad to share with the good Dame Barbara—was long and narrow. There was a window at one end that gave upon the sea; and through the heavy barred grating, set strongly in the thick casement, I could look out upon the low sea-wall, and, beyond that, at the smooth bosom of the dreaming ocean, heaving softly in the quiet starlight, as though such a sorrow lay hidden in its deep heart as troubled even its sleep with sighs.

If I pressed my face close against the bars I could see, to the left of me, the ramparts of the castle, where my dear love was. The slow tears rose in my eyes as I thought that this night the same roof would not shelter us, nor

would there be the same swaying deck beneath our feet.

While we had been together no very real sense of danger had oppressed me ; but from the first hour of our parting my heart grew heavier with forebodings of the evil and sorrow which were yet to come.

CHAPTER VII.

At first all seemed to go well enough. The Governor's lady was fairly gracious to me; old Señor de Colis was profuse in his leering smiles and wordy compliments, none of which I could understand; I saw Mr. Rivers and Melinza from time to time, and they seemed upon good terms with each other: but I did not believe this state of affairs could last,—and I was right in my fears.

One night ('twas the twenty-second of June, and the weather was sultry and oppressive; the sea held its breath, and the round moon burned hot in the hazy sky) the evening meal was served in the little courtyard of the Governor's house, and both Mr. Rivers and Melinza were our guests.

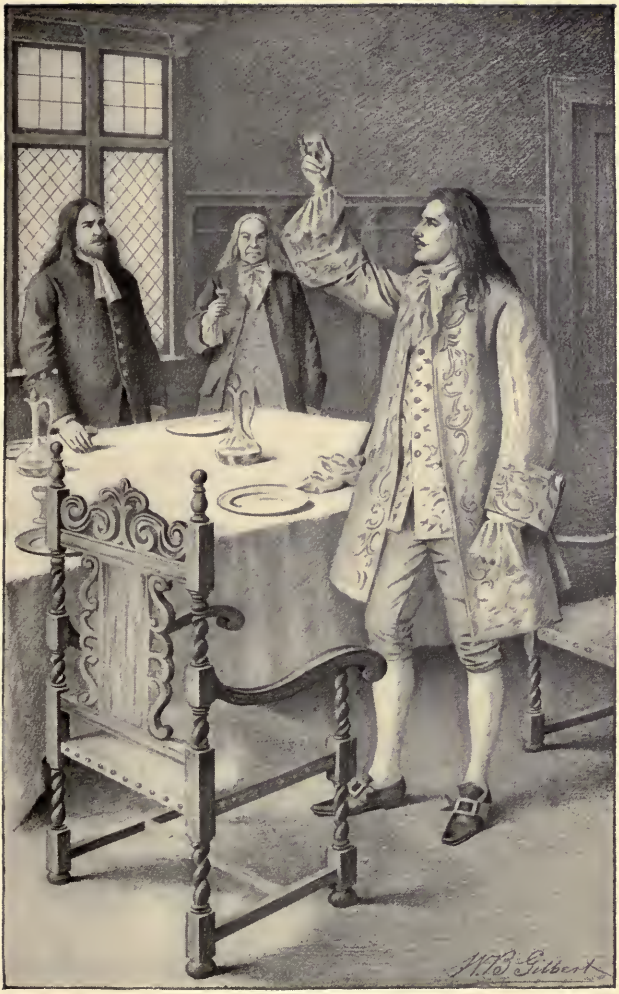
This was not the first occasion on which we had all broken bread at the same board; but there was now an air of mockery in the civilities of Melinza,—he passed the salt to my betrothed with a glance of veiled hostility, and pledged him in a glass of wine with a

smile that ill concealed the angry curl of his sullen red lip.

'Twas a strange meal; the memory of it is like a picture stamped upon my brain.

From the tall brass candlesticks upon the table, the unflickering tapers shone down upon gleaming damask and glistening silver, and kindled sparks amid the diamonds that caught up the folds of lace on the dark head of Doña Orosia, and that gemmed the white fingers clasping her slow-moving fan. Hers was a beauty that boldly challenged men's admiration and exacted tribute of their eyes. The white-haired Governor paid it in full measure, with a fixed and watery gaze from beneath his half-closed lids, and a senile smile lurking under his waxed moustache. But whenever I glanced upward I met the eyes of Mr. Rivers and Don Pedro turned upon me; and I felt a strange thrill made up, in part, of triumph that my dear love was not to be won from his allegiance, and in part of terror because there was that in the Spaniard's gaze that betokened a nature ruled wholly by its hot passions and a will to win what it craved by fair means or by foul.

I could eat little for the heat and the pungent flavour of strange sauces, so I dallied with my plate only as an excuse for lowered



"TO THE BRIGHTEST EYES AND THE LIPS MOST WORTHY OF KISSES!"—*Page 55.*

eyes; and, although I listened all the while with strained attention, the talk ran by too swiftly for me to grasp any of its meaning.

But Doña Orosia was neither deaf nor blind; her keen black eyes had noted every glance that passed her by. With a deeper flush on her olive cheek, and a prouder poise of her haughty head, she made to me at last the signal for withdrawal.

The three gentlemen, glasses in hand, rose from their seats; and, as we passed beneath the arched trellis that led away from the paved court into the fragrant garden, Don Pedro lifted his glass to his lips with a gesture in our direction, and exclaimed in French:

"To the fairest face in San Augustin! To the brightest eyes and the lips most worthy of kisses! May the light of those eyes never be withdrawn from these old walls, nor the lips lack a Spanish blade to guard them from all trespassers!"

The Governor, who understood not the French words, lifted his glass in courteous imitation of his nephew's gesture; but Mr. Rivers coloured hotly and set down his upon the table.

"I like not your toast, Señor Melinza, whichever way I construe it. The face I hold

fairest here shall leave San Augustin the day that I depart; and, since it is the face of my promised wife, it needs no other sword than mine to fend off trespassers!"

He, too, spoke in French; and as the words passed his lips I felt the soft, strong hand of Doña Orosia grasp my arm and drag me backward among the screening vines, beyond the red light of the tapers, where we could listen unseen.

Melinza was laughing softly. "Señor Rivers says he cannot construe my toast to his liking; but perhaps if I give it him in the Spanish tongue he may find the interpretation more to his taste!" Then he lifted his glass again and slowly repeated the words in his own language, with a meaning glance toward the Governor.

The old man drained his goblet to the dregs, and then turned a flushed face upon the Englishman and laid his hand upon his sword.

My dear love had no thoughts of prudence left,—for Melinza's words had been a direct charge of cowardice,—so for all answer he took the frail goblet from the table and threw it in the younger Spaniard's face.

There was a tinkle of broken glass upon the stone pavement, and Melinza wiped the red wine from his cheek. Then he held up the

stained kerchief before the eyes of my dear love and spoke a few words in his softest voice.

An angry smile flickered over the countenance of my betrothed; he bowed stiffly in response.

The blear-eyed Governor broke in hotly, with his hand still upon his sword; his dull eyes narrowed, and the blood mounted higher in his wrinkled cheek: but his nephew laid a restraining hand upon his arm, and, with another laughing speech and a profound bow to Mr. Rivers, pointed toward the door.

I saw the three of them depart through the passageway that led to the street entrance. I heard the creak of the hinges, and the clang of the bars as they fell back into place. Then a strong, sweet odour of crushed blossoms turned me faint. I loosed my hold of the screening vines and stepped backward with a sudden struggle for breath.

The woman beside me caught my arm a second time and drew me still farther away down the moonlit path.

"Is he aught of a swordsman, this fine cavalier of thine?" she demanded, grasping my shoulder tightly and scanning my face with her scornful eyes.

Then my senses came to me: I knew what

had happened—what was bound to follow; and I began to speak wildly and to pray her to prevent bloodshed between them.

I scarce know what I said; but the words poured from my lips, and for very despair I checked them not. I told her of my orphan state—of that lone grave in Barbadoes, and the sad young mother who had died of a broken heart; I spoke of the long, long journey over seas, the love that had come into my life, and the dreams and the hopes that had filled our thoughts when we reached the fair, strange shores of this new country; and I prayed her, as she was a woman and a wife, to let no harm come to my dear love.

"Ah! madame," I cried, "a face so fair as yours needs not the championship of one English stranger, who holds already a preference for blue eyes and yellow hair. I grant you that he has a sorry taste; but oh! I pray you, stop this duel!"

She loosed her hand from the clasp of mine, and looked at me a moment in silence; then she laughed bitterly.

"Thou little fool! Thou little blue-eyed fool! What do men see in that face of thine to move them so? A painter might love thee for the gold of thy hair, thy white brow, and thy blue eyes,—they would grace a pictured

saint above a shrine,—but for a man's kisses, and such love as might tempt him to risk his very life for thee,—*cielos!* it is more than passing strange." Then, as I stood dumb before her, she tapped me lightly on the cheek. "Go to! Art such a fool as to think that *either* sword will be drawn for *my* beauty's sake?"

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT night I had but little sleep.

About an hour after midnight there was a great stir in the house and the sound of opening doors and hurrying footsteps. The unwonted noises terrified me. I leaned against the door, with a heart beating thickly, and I listened. What evil tidings did those sounds portend? There was a loud outcry in a woman's voice,—the voice of Doña Orosia.

I felt that I must know what havoc Fate had wrought in the last hours. I looked at Barbara—she slumbered peacefully on her hard pallet; the moonlight, streaming through the barred window, showed me her withered face relaxed in almost childlike peacefulness. I would not rouse her,—'twas a blessed thing to sleep and forget; but *I* dared not sleep, for I knew not what would be the horror of my waking. With my cheek pressed close against the door I waited a moment longer. Perhaps only those planks intervened 'twixt me and my life's tragedy!

I laid my hand upon the latch. I feared to know the truth,—and yet, if I did not hear it, I must die of dread. Slowly I turned the key and raised the bars: the door swung open.

I stepped out upon the balcony that overhung the court and I looked over. There was no one in sight; the white moonlight lay over everything, and a strong perfume floated up from the flowers in the garden beyond.

I crept down the stair and stood still in the centre of the empty court. Voices sounded near me, but I knew not whence they came. Trembling still, I moved toward the passage that led to the outer door, and I saw that it was bright as day. The door stood ajar. Those who had last gone out had been strangely forgetful—or greatly agitated.

Scarce knowing what I did, I crossed the threshold and hurried down the street in the direction of the fort.

A group of three men stood upon the corner. At the sight of them I paused and hid in the shadow of the wall; but, one of them turning his face toward me, I recognized Captain Baulk, and, going quickly forward, I laid my hand upon his arm.

"How is he? Where have they taken him?" I whispered.

"What! is't Mistress Tudor? Have they

turned you adrift, then? Lor' 'tis a frail craft to be out o' harbour such foul weather!"

"How is he?" I repeated, tightening my grasp upon his sleeve.

"Dead as a pickled herring, poor lad!"

My head struck heavily against the wall as I fell, but I made no outcry.

"Sink me! but the poor lassie thought I meant Mr. Rivers!" I heard the old sailor exclaim as he dropped on his knees beside me,—and the words stayed my failing senses.

"Whom did you mean?" I gasped.

"Young Poole has been done to death, Mistress Margaret. As honest a lad as ever lived, too,—more's the pity!"

I struggled to raise myself, crying: "What do you tell me? Have they killed the lad in pure spite against his master? And where is Mr. Rivers?"

They made me no answer.

"He is dead, then! I knew it, my heart told me so!"

"Eh! poor lass! 'Tis not so bad as that—yet bad enough. They've hung chains enough upon him to anchor a man-o'-war, and moored him fast in the dungeon of the fort. D—n 'em for a crew o' dastard furriners!—an' he own cousin to an English earl!"

"Can you not tell me a straight tale?" I

cried. "What has he done to be so ill served? And whose the enmity behind it all,—Melinza's, or the Governor's?"

"Lor'!" exclaimed one of the sailors, "the young Don is past revenge, mistress. If he lives out the night 'tis more than I look to see."

"Here, now, let me tell the tale, lad," the old captain interposed. "'Twas a duel began it, Mistress Tudor. The young bloods were so keen after fighting they could not wait for sunrise, but must needs have it out by moonlight on the beach. 'Twas over yonder, in the lee of the castle walls."

"Mr. Rivers and Don Pedro?"

"Aye, mistress. The Governor was not by,—'tis likely he knew naught of it."

"Not so!" I cried, "he had his share in the quarrel, and they left the house in company."

"Mayhap," said Captain Baulk, "I'd not gainsay it—for I trust no one o' them; but he chose to go with his weather eye shut rather than take precaution 'gainst the squall. So they had it out all by their selves,—and none of us a whit the wiser, saving young Poole, who had guessed somewhat was amiss and followed his master."

"What then? Speak quickly! Was Mr. Rivers wounded?"

"Not he! That's to say, not by any thrust of the Don's. Lor', but it must ha' been a pretty fight! Pity no man saw it that lives to tell!"

"In the name of mercy, sir, speak plainly!"

"Aye, my young mistress, but give me time an' I will. Mr. Rivers ere long did get in such a thrust that the Don went down before it as suddenly as a ship with all her hull stove in. He lay stranded, with the blood flowing away in a dark stream over the white sands. Our young gentleman, gallant heart, did throw away his sword and fall down beside the Spaniard and strive to staunch his wounds, crying aloud most lustily for aid. Who should hear him but young Poole and that yellow devil of a Tomas! They came from opposite quarters, and Poole was in the shadow, so the other saw him not. The mulatto ran up alongside, and, seeing 'twas the Don who had fallen, he whipped out a knife from his belt and struck at our young master as he knelt there on the ground. Nay, now, do not take on so! Did I not say he was but little hurt? Had the blow struck him fairly in the back, as it was meant to do, doubtless it would have put an end to him; but Poole was to the rescue, poor lad! He threw himself on the mulatto in the nick o' time. The knife had barely

grazed Mr. Rivers on the shoulder; but young Tomas never let go his hold of it. He and the faithful lad rolled together on the ground —and Poole never rose again. His body was stabbed through in a dozen places. Mr. Rivers had no time to interfere; ere he could rise from his knees, or even put out a hand to take his sword, a dozen soldiers had laid hands on him. That devil of a Tomas finished his evil work, and then picked himself up and walked away; never a one laid a finger on him or cried shame on the foul deed!"

The old sailor paused, and each man of the group breathed a curse through his clinched teeth.

"They have taken Mr. Rivers to the dungeon of the fort?" I whispered.

"Aye, so they tell us. None of us were there, which is perhaps for the good of our necks,—yet I would we had had a chance to strike a blow in defence of the poor lad."

"And the Spaniard—Don Pedro?"

"They carried him into the Governor's own house a while since. I think his wound is mortal."

"Then he has brought his death upon himself, for he forced Mr. Rivers into the quarrel," I declared hastily.

"'Twas bound to come," admitted Captain

Baulk, "there has been bad blood between them from the very first. But what are we to do with you, mistress? Did they put you out in anger?"

"Nay," I exclaimed, "I heard a great disturbance and hastened out to seek the cause. The outer door was left unbarred."

"Why then, mistress, we would best make for it again before 'tis shut! This is no hour and no place for a young maid to be out alone." Taking me by the hand he led me back the way I had come; but we were too late. The entrance was closed and barred against us.

"Now, what's to do?" exclaimed the old sailor in dismay.

I had been too crushed and dazed by the ill news to think before of my imprudence; but now I realized how very unwisely I had acted. I turned hastily to the old captain.

"Go and leave me, my good friend," I said. "Already there has been enough trouble of my making. Do not let me have to answer for more. I will wait here and call for some one to open for me. 'Tis better for me to say what is the truth—that I wandered out in my anxiety. Go, I pray you, and be discrete in your conduct, that they may have no just cause to imprison you also."

He saw the wisdom of it and went away

out of sight, while I beat with all my might upon the door.

In a moment steps sounded within, the bars fell, and the door was drawn back. It was the Governor himself who stood there. He looked at me in astonishment as he drew aside for me to pass.

I attempted no explanation; for I knew he could not understand me. Doubtless he would tell his lady and she would hold me to account. Slowly I mounted to the balcony above and pushed open the door of my chamber.

The dame still slept peacefully. I went softly to the window and knelt down. My heart was sick for the faithful lad who had died in defending Mr. Rivers. Poor boy! He had no mother—I wonder if there was a little lass anywhere whom he loved? But no, he was young for that. I think his love was all his master's. And to die for those whom we love best is not so sad a fate as to live for their undoing!

The hot tears ran down my face. I leaned my cheek against the bars and set free my thoughts, which flew, as swift as homing pigeons, to my dear love in his dungeon cell.

Oh! I would that all the prayers I pray,

and all the tender thoughts I think of him, had wings in very truth; and that after they had flown heavenward they might bear thence some balm, some essence of divinest pity, to cheer him in his loneliness! If it were so, then there would be in never-ending flight, up from the barred window where I kneel, and downward to the narrow slit in his prison wall, two shining lines of fluttering white wings coming and going all these long nights through!

CHAPTER IX.

MANY days have passed since I began to write these pages.

All the morning after that terrible night, with Barbara I waited fearfully for some manifestation of Doña Orosia's anger. But there was none, nor were we summoned out that day. Food was brought to us, and we remained like prisoners in our chamber. Don Pedro was very low, the servant told us, and the Governor's lady was nursing him.

A week went by,—the longest week I had ever known,—and then we heard that Melinza would recover. However, it was not until he had lain ill a fortnight that Doña Orosia came to visit me.

I was sitting by the window with my head upon my hand, and Barbara was putting some stitches in the worn places in her gown, when the door opened to admit my hostess.

She came straight toward me with a glint of anger in her dark eyes. The long nights of anxious watching had driven back the blood from her smooth olive cheek, and the

red lips showed the redder for her unaccustomed pallor. She laid one hand on my head, tilting it backward.

"You little white-faced fool! I would you had never set foot in this town," she cried bitterly.

"Ah! madame, I came not of my own free will," I answered her. "I and my dear love would willingly go hence, an you gave us the means to do so!"

"'Tis likely that we shall, truly," she replied. "'Tis likely that the Governor of San Augustin will keep a galley to ply up and down the coast for the convenience of you English intruders! There came two more of you this morning, from the friar at Santa Catalina."

"Two more English prisoners!" I exclaimed. "Who are they, madame?"

"I know not, and I care not," she said. "I meddle not with things that do not concern me. I come here now but to hear how you came to be on the streets at midnight. Had I been in the Governor's place then, I would have shut the door in your face."

I told her the truth, as it had happened to me; and when she had heard it her brow lightened somewhat.

"Are you deceiving me? You did not leave here till *after* the duel had taken place?"

"Madame," I said, "I have never yet told a lie, and I would not now were it to save my life."

Her lip curled slightly as she turned to go. "Stir not from this room, then, until Don Pedro is well enough to leave the house," she said. "If I could prevent it he should never look upon your face again." She paused an instant, then added: "I *will* prevent it!"

"Amen to that!" I said, and I felt the blood burn warmly in my cheek.

She turned and looked at me, and I met her gaze with defiant eyes.

"Amen to that, madame!—for truly I hate him with all my heart!"

She stood still, a slow crimson rising in her pale face, and I trembled a little at my own daring. Then, to my surprise, she laughed at me.

"You think that you hate him desperately?" she exclaimed. "Silly child, it is not in thy power to hate that man as I do, as I have done for years!" and with that she went away and left me wondering.

CHAPTER X.

JULY, the 16th day.

Two things have happened recently to break the sad monotony of my life within these walls.

Doña Orosia and Melinza have had a disagreement, which has resulted in his removal hence—at his own demand. Although I know nothing of the cause of their quarrel, Doña Orosia's last words to me, the other day, make it possible to understand the man's reluctance to remain here in her care,—and yet they say it was her nursing that saved his life! I would that I could understand it all!

Since his departure I have had the freedom of the courtyard and garden; and yesterday, by good chance, I had speech with one of the newly arrived English prisoners.

It had been a day of terrible heat, and just at nightfall I wandered out into the garden all alone. There is a high wall to it, which so joins the dwelling that together they form a hollow square. This wall is of soft gray stone; it is of a good thickness, and about a man's

height. Along the top of it sharp spikes are set; and near one corner is a wrought-iron gate of great strength, which is kept securely locked.

It is not often that I venture near this gate, for it looks out upon the street, and I care not to be seen by any Indian or half-breed Spaniard who might go loitering by; but as I stood in the vine-covered arbour in the centre of the garden I heard a man's voice from the direction of the gate, humming a stave of a maritime air that I had heard sung oft and again by the sailors on the sloop, in which some unknown fair one is ardently invited to—

"—be the Captain's lady!"

and I knew it must be a friend. So I made haste thither and peered out into the street.

Sure enough it was old Captain Baulk, and with him a gentleman whose face, even in the twilight, was well known to me,—he being none other than Mr. John Collins of Barbadoes (the same who had given us news of my poor father's end, and one of our fellow passengers on the *Three Brothers*).

They both greeted me most kindly and inquired earnestly how I did and if I was well treated. It seems that for days they had been trying to get speech with me, but could find none to deliver a message; so for two nights

past they had hung about the gate, hoping that by chance I might come out to them.

Mr. Collins related to me how the sloop had been sent back to Santa Catalina with letters to the friar and the Governor of San Augustin, demanding our release on the ground that as peace was now subsisting between the crowns of England and of Spain, and no act of hostility had been committed by us, our capture was unwarrantable. But Padre Ignacio, with his plausible tongue, had beguiled them ashore into his power.

"The man is a very devil for fair words and smooth deceits," declared Mr. Collins. "In spite of all the warnings we had received, some of us landed without first demanding hostages of the Indians; and when we would have departed two of us were forcibly detained on pretence of our lacking proper credentials to prove our honesty. In sooth he charged us with piratical intentions, though we had not so much as cracked a pistol or inveigled one barbarian aboard. The sloop lingered for three days, but finally made off, leaving us in the hands of the padre. He despatched us here in canoes, under a guard of some twenty half-naked savages, with shaven crowns, who are no more converted Christians than the fiends in hell!"

I asked, then, for news of my uncle, Dr. Scrivener, and Mr. Collins assured me that he was most anxious for my safety, and would have come back with them to demand us of the friar, but he had received a hurt in the neck during the attack at Santa Catalina and was in no state to travel, although the wound was healing well—for which God be thanked!

So far, all the prisoners, except Mr. Rivers, have the freedom of the town; but Captain Baulk declared he would as lief be confined within the fort.

"There be scarce two honest men—saving ourselves—in all San Augustin," he said. "The lodging-house where we sleep is crowded with dirty, thieving half-breeds, who would as willingly slit a man's throat as a pig's. Though they hold us as guests against our will, we must e'en pay our own score; and some fine night—you mark me!—we shall find ourselves lacking our purses."

"Then the Governor will be at the cost of our entertainment," said Mr. Collins.

"'Twill be prison fare, sir," grunted the old sailor, "and we'll be lucky if he doesn't find it cheaper to heave us overboard and be done with it!"

"Tut! man,—hold your croaking tongue in the poor young lady's presence," whispered

Mr. Collins; but I heard what he said, and bade him tell us our true case and what real hope there was of our liberation.

"There is every certainty," he said. "When word reaches their Lordships in England, they will not fail to make complaint to the Spanish Council,—and they have no just cause for refusing to set us free. But I trust we shall not have to wait for that. If we had a Governor of spirit, instead of a timorous old man like Sayle, he would have already sent the frigate down here to demand us of the Spaniards. There are not lacking men to carry out the enterprise: Captain Brayne could scarce be restrained from swooping down on the whole garrison—as Rob Searle did, not long ago, when he rescued Dr. Woodward out of their clutches."

"Captain Brayne!—the frigate! Do you mean that the *Carolina* has arrived?"

"Two months ahead of our sloop," declared Mr. Collins; "but Governor Sayle has despatched her to Virginia for provisions, of which we were beginning to run short. The *Port Royal* has not been heard of, so 'tis feared she went down in the storm."

He went on to tell me of the new settlement which had been already laid out at a place called Kiawah,—a very fair and fruitful

country, which Heaven grant I may one day see!

In my turn I related all that had befallen me since we reached this place. They heard me out very gravely, and promised to contrive some means of communicating with me in case of need.

Then, as it grew very late, we parted, promising to meet the following night; and I crept softly back to the house and my little room, greatly comforted that I now had a worthy gentleman like Mr. Collins with whom I could advise; for with his knowledge of the Spanish tongue and his sound judgment I hope he may influence the Governor in our favour.

. . . . . .

The sun is setting now, I think, although I cannot see it from my window; for all the sky without is faintly pink, and every ripple on the bay turns a blushing cheek toward the west. I must lay by my pen and watch for an opportunity to keep tryst at the gateway with my two good friends. . . .

Nine of the clock.

God help me! I waited in the garden till I heard a whistle, and stole down to the gate as before.

A man put out his hand and caught at mine through the bars. It was that vile Tomas—

the wretch who would have murdered my dear love! I screamed and fled, but he called after me in Spanish. The words were strange to me —but the tones of his voice and the coarse laughter needed no interpreter!

As I flew across the garden, too frightened to attempt concealment, Doña Orosia stepped out into the courtyard and demanded an explanation. I knew not what to say, for I could not divulge the motive that had sent me out; but I told her that a man had called me from the gate, and when I went near to see who it might be I recognized the servant of Melinza.

She seemed to doubt me at first, till I described him closely; then she was greatly angered and forbade me the garden altogether.

"If I find you here alone again," she hissed, seizing my shoulder with no gentle grasp, "if I find you here again, I will turn the key upon you and keep you prisoner in your chamber."

So now I dare not venture beyond the court and the balconies; and there will be no chance of speaking with Mr. Collins unless he dares to come under my window, and there is little hope of his doing that unseen, for 'tis in full view from the ramparts of the fort, where a sentry paces day and night.

CHAPTER XI.

AUGUST, the 7th day.

When I began this tale of our captivity it was with the hope that I might find some means of sending it to friends, in this country or in England, who would interest themselves in obtaining our release. However, from what Mr. Collins told me, I feel assured that news of Mr. Rivers's capture has already been sent to their Lordships the proprietors, and this record of mine seems now but wasted labour. Yet from time to time, for my own solace, I shall add to it; and perchance, some day in safety and freedom, I and —— another —— may together read its tear-stained pages.

This day I have completed the seventeenth year of my age. It is a double anniversary, for one year ago this night—it being the eve of our departure from England—I first set eyes upon my dear love.

Can it be possible that he, in his dolorous prison, has taken account of the passing days and remembers that night—a year ago? 'Twould be liker a man if he took no thought of

the date till it was past,—yet I do greatly wonder if he has forgotten.

As for me, the memory has lived with me all these hours since I unclosed my eyes at dawn.

I can see now the brightly lighted cabin of the *Carolina*, where the long supper-table was laid for the many passengers who were to set out on the morrow for a new world. I had been somehow parted from my uncle, Dr. Scrivener, and I stood in the cabin doorway half afraid to venture in and meet the eyes of all the strangers present. I felt the colour mounting warmly in my cheek, and my feet were very fain to run away, when Captain Henry Brayne, the brave and cheery commander of the frigate, caught sight of me, and, rising hastily, led me to a seat at his own right hand.

(I do recollect that I wore a new gown of fine blue cloth—a soft and tender colour, that became me well.)

As I took my place I glanced shyly round, and saw, at the farther end of the long table, the gallantest gentleman I had ever set eyes upon in all my sixteen years of life. He was looking directly at me, and presently he lifted his glass and said:

"Captain Brayne, I give you *the Carolina and every treasure she contains!*"

There was some laughter as the toast was drunk, and my uncle—who had only that moment entered and taken his seat beside me—asked of me an explanation.

"Nay, Dr. Scrivener," said the jovial captain, "'tis not likely the little lady was attending. But now I give you—*the health of Mistress Tudor!* (and it will not be the first time it has been proposed to-night!)"

And that was but a year ago. I would never have guessed that at seventeen I could feel so very old.

CHAPTER XII.

San Augustin's Day—August, the 28th.

Oh! but I have been angered this day!

What? when my betrothed lies in prison, ill, perhaps, or fretting his brave heart away, am I to be dragged forth to make part of a pageant for the entertainment of his jailers? I would sooner have the lowest cell in the dungeon—aye! and starve and stifle for lack of food and air, than be forced to deck myself out in borrowed bravery, and sit mowing and smiling in a gay pavilion, and clap hands in transport over the fine cavalier airs of the man I hold most in abhorrence!

Do they take me for so vapid a little fool that I may be compelled to any course they choose? Nay, then, they have learned a lesson. Oh, but it is good to be in a fair rage for once!

I had grown so weary and sick at heart that the blood crawled sluggishly in my veins; my eyes were dull and heavy; I had sat listlessly, with idle hands, day after day, waiting—waiting for I knew not what! Therefore it was that I had no will or courage to oppose the

Governor's wife when she came to me this morning and bade me wear the gown she brought, and pin a flower in my hair, and sit with her in the Governor's pavilion to see the fine parade go by.

"This is a great day in San Augustin," she said, "being the one-hundred-and-fifth anniversary of its founding by the Spanish."

As the captives of olden times made part of the triumph of their conquerors, 'twas very fit that I, forsooth, should lend what little I possessed of youth and fairness to the making of a Spanish holiday!

But I was too spiritless, then, to dare a refusal. I bowed my head meekly enough while Chépa—the smiling, good-natured negress—gathered up the rustling folds of the green silk petticoat and slipped it over my shoulders. I made no demur while she looped and twisted the long tresses of my yellow hair, fastening it high with a tall comb, and tying a knot of black velvet riband upon each of the wilful little bunches of curls that ever come tumbling about my ears.

When all was finished, and the lace mantilla fastened to my comb and draped about my shoulders, I was moved by Barbara's cries of admiration to cast one glance upon the mirror. 'Twas an unfamiliar picture that I saw there,

and my pale face blushed with some mortification that it should have lent itself so kindly to a foreign fashion.

I would have thrown off all the braveries that minute; but just then came a message from Doña Orosia, bidding me hasten.

"What matters anything to me now?" I thought wearily; and, slowly descending to the courtyard, I took my place in the closed chair that waited, and was borne after the Governor's lady to the Plaza, where, at the western end facing upon the little open square, was the gay pavilion.

Its red and yellow banners shone gaudily in the hot sunlight of the summer afternoon, and the fresh sea breeze kept the tassels and streamers all a-flutter, like butterflies hovering over a bed of flowers.

Three sides of the Plaza were lined with spectators, but the eastern end—which opened out toward the bay—was kept clear for the troops to enter.

Against the slight railing of the little pavilion leaned Doña Orosia, strangely fair in a gown of black lace and primrose yellow, that transformed the soft contours of her throat and cheek from pale olive to the purest pearl. She deigned to bestow but a single cold, unfriendly glance upon me; then she bent for-

ward as before, her lifted fan shielding her eyes from the glare of the sun-kissed sea.

Presently, with the blare of trumpets and the deep rolling of the drums, the King's troops came in sight, three hundred strong.

At the head of the little band, which marched afoot, rode Melinza and the Governor. 'Twas the first time I had seen a horse in the town.

Old Señor de Colis was mounted on a handsome bay that pranced and curvetted beneath him, to his most evident discomfort; but Melinza's seat was superb. It was a dappled gray he rode, with flowing mane and tail of silvery white; a crimson rosette was fastened to its crimped forelock, and the long saddle-cloth was richly embroidered.

As the little company swept round the square, the two horsemen saluted our pavilion. Don Pedro lifted his plumed hat high, and I saw that his face was pale from his recent wound, but the bold black eyes were as bright as ever they had been before.

I drew back hastily from the front of the pavilion and made no pretence of returning his salute. Then, for the first time since I had taken my seat beside her, Doña Orosia spoke to me.

"Why such scant courtesy?" she asked, with lifted brows.

"Madame," I answered, "had my betrothed been here at my side, an honoured guest, I would have had more graciousness at my command."

"What!" she exclaimed, "have you not yet had time to forget your quarrelsome cavalier?"

"I will forget him, madame, when I cease to remember the treachery of those who called themselves his entertainers."

She flushed angrily. "Your tongue has more of spirit than your face. I wonder that you have the courage to say this to me."

"I dare, because I have nothing more to lose, madame!"

"Say you so? Would you rather I gave you into Melinza's keeping?"

"Nay!" I cried, "you could not—such unfaith would surpass the limits of even Spanish treachery! And you would not—it would please you better *if he never set eyes upon my face again!* I only wonder that you should have brought me here to-day!"

She opened her lips to speak; but the blare of the trumpets drowned the words, and she turned away from me.

The troops were drawn in line across the square: on the right, the Spanish regulars of the garrison; on the left, the militia companies,

which had come up while we were speaking. These last were made up, for the most part, of mulattoes and half-breed Indians,—a swarthy-faced, ill-looking band that appeared fitter for savage warfare of stealth and ambuscade and poisoned arrows than for valorous exploits and honest sword-play.

The various manœuvres of the troops, under the skilled leadership of Don Pedro, occupied our attention for upward of an hour, during all which time my companion appeared quite unconscious of my presence. She sat motionless save for the swaying of her fan. Only once did her face express aught but fixed attention—and that was when a sudden fanfare of the trumpets caused the Governor's horse to plunge, and the old man lurched forward on the pommel of his saddle, his plumed hat slipping down over his eyes.

For an instant the swaying fan was still; a low laugh sounded in my ear, and, turning, I saw the red lips of the Governor's lady take on a very scornful curve.

She received him graciously enough, however, when—the review being over—he dismounted and joined us in the pavilion.

Melinza had retired with the troops; but just as the last rank disappeared from view he came galloping back at full speed, flung

himself from the saddle, and, throwing the reins to an attendant, mounted the pavilion stair.

I felt that Doña Orosia's eyes were upon me, and I believed that she liked me none the less for my hostility to the man. It may have been this that gave me courage—I do not know—I think I would not have touched his hand in any case.

He flushed deeply when I put both of mine behind my back; then, with the utmost effrontery, he leaned forward and plucked away one little black rosette that had fallen loose from my curls and was slipping down upon my shoulder. This he raised to his lips with a laugh, and then fastened upon his breast.

I was deeply angered, and I cast about for some means of retaliation that would show him the scorn I held him in.

At the foot of the pavilion stood the youth who was holding Melinza's horse.

I leaned over the railing, and, loosing quickly from my hair the fellow to the rosette Don Pedro wore, I tossed it to the lad below, saying, in almost the only Spanish words I knew,—

"It is a gift!"

Melinza's face grew white with anger; he tore off the bit of riband and ground it under

his heel; then he strode down the stair, mounted his horse, and rode away.

The Governor's lady watched him till he was out of sight; then, with a strange smile, she said to me,—

"I never knew before that blue eyes had so much of fire in them. I think, my little saint, 'tis time I sent you back to your old duenna."

"I would thank you for so much grace!" was my reply. And back to Barbara I was despatched forthwith.

But though I have been some hours in my chamber, my indignation has not cooled. The very sight of that man's countenance is more than I can endure!

I am resolved that I will never set foot outside my door when there is any chance of my encountering him, and so I shall inform the Governor's wife when she returns. . . .

She laughs at me! She declares I shall do whatever is her pleasure! And what is my puny strength to hers? With all the will in the world to resist her, I am as wax in her hands!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE first day of March.

For six months I have added nothing to this record; though time and again I have taken up my pen to write, and then laid it by, with no mark upon the fresh page. Can heart-ache be written down in words? Can loneliness and longing,—the desolation of one who has no human creature on whom to lavish love and care,—the dull misery that is known only to those whose best beloved are suffering the worst woes of this woeful life,—can all these be told? Ah, no! one can only feel them—bear them—and be crushed by them.

If it had not been for the good old dame, I know not what would have become of me. Many a day and many a night I have clung to her for hours, weeping—crying aloud, "I cannot bear it! I cannot!" What choice had I but to bear it? And tears cannot flow forever; the calm of utter weariness succeeds.

'Tis not that I have been ill treated. I am well housed, and daintily clothed and fed. Unless Melinza—or some other guest—is

present, I sit at the Governor's own table. His wife makes of me something between a companion and a plaything: one moment I have to bear with her capricious kindness; the next, I am teased or driven away from her with as little courtesy as she shows to the noble hound that follows her like her own shadow.

Until lately I have seen little of Melinza. Early in the winter he went away to the Habana and remained absent two months, during which time I had more peace of mind than I have known since first we came here. But since his return he has tried in various ways to force himself into my presence; and Doña Orosia,—who could so easily shield me if she chose,—before she comes to my relief, permits him to annoy me until I am roused to the point of passionate repulse. One could almost think she loves to see me suffer—unless it is the sight of his discomfiture that affords her such satisfaction.

But all of this I could endure if only my dear love were free! I have heard that he is ill. It may not be true,—God grant that it is not! Still, though the rumour came to me by devious ways, and through old Barbara's lips at last (and she is ever prone to think the worst), it is more than possible! I, myself,

have suffered somewhat from this long confinement; and in how much worse case is he!

I have tried to occupy myself, that I may keep my thoughts from dwelling forever on our unhappy state. In the past six months I have so far mastered the Spanish tongue that now I can converse in it with more ease than in the French. The Governor declares that I have the true intonation; and even Doña Orosia admits that I have shown some aptitude. I care nothing for it as a mere accomplishment; but I hope that the knowledge may be of use if ever we attempt escape. (Though what chance of escape is there when Mr. Rivers is within stone walls and I have no means of even holding converse with Mr. Collins?)

I have one other accomplishment that has won me more favour with the Governor's wife than aught else. She discovered, one day, that I have some skill with the lute, and a voice not lacking in sweetness; and now she will have me sing to her by the hour until my throat is weary and I have to plead for rest.

I had, recently, a conversation with her that has haunted me every hour since; for it showed me a side of her nature that I had not seen before, and that leads me to think that under her caprice and petulance there is a deep purpose hidden.

I had exhausted my list of songs, and as she still demanded more I bethought me of a curious old ballad I had heard many years ago. The air eluded me for some while; but my fingers, straying over the strings, fell suddenly into the plaintive melody; with it, the words too came back to me.

I bade my love fareweel, wi' tears;
He bade fareweel to me.
"How sall I pass the lang, lang years?"
"I maun be gane," quo' he.

The tear-draps frae mine een did rin
Like water frae a spring;
But while I grat, my love gaed in
To feast and reveling!

The tear-draps frae mine een did start
Salt as the briny tide:
Sae sair my grief, sae fu' my heart,
I wept a river wide.

Adoon that stream my man did rove,
And crossed the tearfu' sea.
O whaur'll I get a leal true love
To bide at hame wi' me?

The lang, lang years they winna pass;
My lord is still awa'.
Mayhap he loves a fairer lass—
O wae the warst ava!

How sall I wile my lover hame?
I'll drink the tearfu' seas!

My red mou' to their briny faem,
I'll drain thèm to the lees!

Then gin he comes na hameward soon
His ain true love to wed,
I'll kilt my claes and don my shoon
And cross the sea's dry bed.

"Oh in thine heart, my love, my lord,
Mak' room, mak' room for me;
Or at thy feet, by my true word,
Thy lady's grave sall be!"

"A melancholy air, yet with somewhat of a pleasing sadness in its minor cadences," commented Dona Orosia when I had ceased. "Translate me the words, an your Spanish is sufficient."

"That it is not, I fear," was my reply, "and the task is beyond me for the further reason that the song is not even English, but in a dialect of the Scots. 'Tis only the plaint of a poor lady whose mind seems to have gone astray in her long waiting for a faithless lover"—and I gave her the sense of the verses as best I could.

"Nay," said the Spanish woman, with a singular smile. "She hath more wit than you credit her with. You mark me, the flood of a woman's tears will bear a man further than a mighty river, and her sighs waft him away more speedily than the strongest gale. And

once he has gone, taking with him such a memory of her, 'twould be far easier for her to drink the ocean dry than to wile him home. For let a man but suspect that a woman *could* break her heart for him, and he——is more than content to let her do it!"

She paused; but I made no answer, having none upon my tongue. Presently she added: "When once a woman has the folly to plead for herself, in that moment she murders Love; and every tear she sheds thereafter becomes another clod upon his grave. There remains but one thing for her to do——"

"Herself to die!" I murmured.

"Nay, child! To live and be revenged!" She turned a flushed face toward me; and, though the water stood in her eyes, they were hard and angry. "To be revenged! To plot and to scheme; to bide her time patiently; to study his heart's desire, and to foster it; and then——"

"And then?" I questioned softly, with little shivers of repulsion chilling me from head to foot.

"*To rob him of it.*"

The words were spoken deliberately, in a voice that was resonant and slow. 'Twas not like the outburst of a moment's impulse—the sudden jangling of a harpstring rudely

touched ; it was rather with the fateful emphasis of a clock striking the hour, heralded by a premonitory quiver—a gathering together of inward forces that had waited through long moments for this final utterance.

What manner of woman was this? I caught my breath with a little shuddering cry.

Doña Orosia turned quickly.

"Go! Leave me!" she cried. "Do you linger? Can I never be rid of you? Out of my sight! I would have a moment's respite from your great eyes and your white face. Go!"

And I obeyed her.

CHAPTER XIV.

MARCH, the 9th day.

Doña Orosia sent for me at noon to-day. There was news to tell, and she chose to be the one to tell it.

I found her in her favourite seat,—a great soft couch, covered with rich Moorish stuffs, and placed under the shadow of the balcony that overlooks the sunny garden. Up each of the light pillars from which spring the graceful arches that support this balcony climbs a mass of blooming vines that weave their delicate tendrils round the railing above and then trail downward again in festoons of swaying colour. Behind, in the luminous shadow, she lay coiled and half asleep; with a large fan of bronze turkey-feathers in one lazy hand, the other teasing the tawny hound which was stretched out at her feet.

She opened her great eyes as I came near.

"Ah! the little blue-eyed Margarita, the little saint who frowns when men worship at her shrine," she said slowly. "There is news for you. The *Virgen de la Mar* arrived last

night from Habana, bringing the commands of the Council of Spain that the English prisoners here detained be liberated forthwith. For it seems that there has been presented to the Council, through our ambassador to the English Court, a memorial, which clearly proves that these persons have given no provocation to any subject of his Catholic Majesty, Charles the Second of Spain, and are therefore unlawfully imprisoned. How like you that?" The waving fan was suddenly stilled, and the brilliant eyes half veiled.

"Is this true?" I asked, for my heart misgave me.

She laughed. "It is true that the *Virgen de la Mar* has brought those orders to the Governor of San Augustin—and that my husband has received them."

"Will he obey them, señora?"

"Will who obey them?" she asked; and there was a gleam of white teeth under the red, curling lip. "My husband, or the Governor of San Augustin?"

"Are they not the same?"

"If you think so, little fool," she cried, half rising from her couch; "if you think so still, you would better go back to your chamber and pray yourself and your lover out of prison!"

I made no answer; I waited, without much hope, for what she would say next. My heart was very full, but I would not pleasure her by weeping.

"Child," she continued, sinking back among the cushions and speaking in a slow, impressive manner, "there are *two* Governors in San Augustin—and they take their commands neither from the child-King, the Queen-mother, nor any of the Spanish Council. My husband is not one; he obeys them both by turns. His Excellency Don Pedro Melinza decrees that these orders from Spain shall be carried out except in the case of one Señor Rivers, who will be held here to answer for an unprovoked assault on one of his Majesty's subjects, whom he severely wounded; also for inciting others of his fellow prisoners to break their parole, and for various other offences against the peace of this garrison,—all of which charges Melinza will swear to be true."

"Is he so lost to honour? And will your husband uphold him in the lie?"

"Hear me out," she continued in the same tone. "Melinza also decides that these orders do not include the English señorita, Doña Margaret, whom he intends to detain here for ——for reasons best known to himself; although the other Governor of San Augustin

decrees"——she started up from her nest of pillows and continued in a wholly different tone: "*I* say—*I* say—that you shall quit this place with the other prisoners, and my husband dares not oppose me! I am sick of your white face and your saintly blue eyes; I am wearied to death of your company; but I swear Melinza shall not have you! Therefore go you must, and speedily."

"And leave my betrothed at Don Pedro's mercy?"

"What is that to me? Let him rot in his dungeon. I care not—so I am rid of your white face."

She shut her eyes angrily and thrust out her slippered foot at the sleeping hound. He lifted his great head and yawned; then, gathering up his huge bulk from the ground, he drew closer to his mistress's side and sniffed the air with solicitude, as though seeking a cause for her displeasure. There was a dish of cakes beside her, and she took one in her white fingers and threw it to the dog. He let it fall to the ground, and nosed it doubtfully, putting forth an experimental tongue,—till, finding it to his taste, he swallowed it at a gulp. His mistress laughed, and tossed him another, which disappeared in his great jaws. A third met the same fate; but the fourth she ex-

tended to him in her pink palm, and, as he would have taken it she snatched the hand away. Again and again the poor brute strove to seize the proffered morsel, but each time it was lifted out of his reach; till finally his lithe body was launched upward, and he snapped both the cake and the hand that teased him.

'Twas the merest scratch, and truly the dog meant it not in anger; but on the instant Doña Orosia flushed crimson to her very brow, and, drawing up her silken skirt, she snatched a jewelled dagger from her garter and plunged it to the hilt in the poor beast's throat. The red blood spouted, and the huge body dropped in a tawny heap.

I rushed forward and lifted the great head; but the eyes were glazed.

"Señora!" I cried, "señora! the poor brute loved you!"

She spurned the limp body with a careless foot, saying,—

"So did—once—the man who gave it me."

Then she clapped her hands, and the negro servant came and at her command dragged away the carcass, wiped the bloody floor, and brought a basin of clear water and a linen cloth to bathe the scratch on her hand. When he had gone she made me bind it up

with her broidered kerchief and stamped her foot because I drew the knot over-tight.

"Doña Orosia," I said, when I had done it to her liking. "If all you care for, in this other matter, is to get rid of my white face, I pray you kill me with your dagger and ask your lord to let my love go free."

She looked up curiously. "Would you die for him?" she asked.

"Most willingly, an it please you to make my death his ransom."

Still she gazed at me and seemed strangely stirred. "Once I loved like that," she said in musing tones. "I will tell thee a tale, child, for I like not the reproach in those blue eyes. Five years ago, when I was as young as thou art now, I lived with my parents in Valencia, where the flowers are even sweeter and the skies bluer than here in sunny Florida. I had a lover in those days, who followed me like my shadow, and, in spite of my old duenna, found many a moment to pour his passion in my ears. He was a brave man and a handsome, and he won my heart from me. Though he had no great fortune I would have wed him willingly and followed him over land and sea. I never doubted him for a day; and when he came to my father's house with an old nobleman, his uncle and the head of his

family, I was well content; for my mother told me they had asked for my hand and it had been promised. But when my father called me in at last to see my future husband, it was the old man who met me with a simper on his wrinkled face. I turned to the nephew; but he was gazing out of the window——"

She broke off with a fierce laugh and then added bitterly,—"And so I came to marry my husband, the Governor of San Augustin!"

"The other was Don Pedro?"

"Has thy baby wit compassed that much? Yes, the other was Melinza."

"But if you once loved him why should there be hate between you now?"

"Why? thou little fool! Why?"—she put out one hand and drew me closer, so that she could look deep into my eyes. "Why does a woman ever hate a man? Canst tell me that?"

We gazed at each other so until I saw—I scarce know what I saw! My head swam, and of a sudden it came over me that when the angels fell from heaven there must have been an awful beauty in their eyes!

CHAPTER XV.

I AWOKE this morning with a sense of horror haunting me,—and then I recalled the scene of yesterday and the dumb appeal in the eyes of the dying hound. The story the Spanish woman had told me of her own past pleaded nothing in excuse. Hatred and cruelty seemed strange fruit for love to bear.

I thought of my own ill fortunes, and I said within me: True Love sits at the door of the heart to guard it from all evil passions. Loss and Pain may enter in, and Sorrow bear them company; but Revenge and Cruelty, Untruth, and all their evil kin, must hide their shamed faces and pass by!

Secure in the thought of the pure affection that reigned in my own bosom, I went forth and met Temptation, and straightway fell from the high path in which I believed my feet to be so surely fixed!

Doña Orosia seemed to be in a strangely gentle mood.

"Child, how pale thy face is! Didst thou not lie awake all night? Deny it not, 'tis writ most plainly in the dark shadows round those

great blue eyes. Come, rest here beside me'—and she drew me down upon the couch and slipped a soft pillow under my head.

I was fairly dumfounded at this unwonted courtesy, and could find no words to meet it with. But she appeared unconscious of my silence and continued speaking.

"'Tis the thought of the English lover that robs thee of sleep, Margarita mia! Thou wouldst give thy very life to procure his freedom; is it not so? Would any task be too hard for thee with this end in view?"

I could not answer; I clasped my hands and looked at her in silence.

"I thought as much," she said, smiling, and laid a gentle finger on my cheek.

"Oh, señora, you will aid me to save him! You will plead with the Governor—you will set him free?"

She drew back coldly. "You ask too much. I have told you that there are two Governors in San Augustin—I divide the honours with Melinza; but I plead with him for naught."

I turned away to hide the quivering of my lip.

"Listen to me," she added more kindly. "Between Pedro Melinza and Orosia de Colis there is at present an armed peace; since

each holds a hostage. Not that I care anything for the Englishman, but my husband is undesirous of defying the commands of the Council. Although he bears no love to your nation, he maintains that it is not the policy of our government, at present, to ignore openly the friendly relations that are supposed to exist between the Crowns of England and of Spain. It seems that the duplicate of the Council's orders has been sent to the Governor of your new settlement on this coast; and if he sends hither to demand the delivery of the prisoners, Señor de Colis would rather choose to yield up all, than to risk a reprimand from the authorities at home.

"Dost thou understand all this? Well, let us now see the reverse of the picture.

"Melinza sets his own desires in the scale, and they outweigh all politic scruples. He has sworn that so long as I stand between him and you, so long will Señor Rivers remain in the castle dungeon,—unless Death steps kindly in to set your lover free."

A little sob broke in my throat at these cruel words. Doña Orosia laid her hand on mine.

"Poor little one!" she said.

"You pity me, señora! What is your pity worth?" I demanded, forcing back the tears.

"I have a way of escape to offer," she answered softly.

"Escape for him? Or for me?"

"For both. Now listen! There is but one way to relax Melinza's hold on Señor Rivers. He would exchange him willingly for you."

"Better for us both to die!" I exclaimed indignantly.

"I would sooner kill you with my own hands than give you up to him," said Doña Orosia, with a cold smile.

"Then what do you mean, señora?"

"I mean, Margarita mia, that you should feign a tenderness for him and let him think that it is I who would keep two loving souls apart."

"What! when I have shown him naught but dislike in all these months? He could never be so witless as to believe in such a sudden transformation."

"Such is the vanity of man," said Doña Orosia, "that he would find it easier to believe that you had feigned hatred all this while from fear of me, than to doubt that you had eventually fallen a victim to his fascinations."

"What would it advantage me if I did deceive him?"

"He would then cease to oppose the liberation of all the other prisoners."

"But what of my fate, señora?"

"Leave that in my hands, little one,—I am not powerless. I give thee my word he shall never have thee. At the last moment we shall undeceive him"—and she laughed a low laugh of triumph.

I glanced up quickly.

"So!" I exclaimed. "This will be your revenge! And you would bribe me, with my dear love's freedom, to act a part in it! To lie for you; to play at love where I feel only loathing; to sully my lips with feigned caresses; and to make a mockery of the holiest thing in life!"

"Is your Englishman not worth some sacrifice?" she asked, with lifted brows.

What could I say? I left her. I hastened to my little room, shut fast the door, and bolted it on the inner side. Then I knelt at the barred window and looked out at the sunlight and the sea.

The blue waves danced happily, and the fresh wind kissed the sparkling ripples till the foam curled over them—as white lids droop coyly over laughing eyes. Two snowy gulls dipped and soared, flashing now against the blue sky—now into the blue sea. I gazed at their white wings—and thought of all the vain prayers I had sent up to Heaven.

And then the dark hour of my life closed down on me.

I bethought me of my father, that loyal gentleman whose only fault was that he served his Prince too well,—a Prince whose gratitude had never prompted him to inquire concerning that servant's fate, or to offer a word of consolation to the wife who had lost her all. I bethought me of my young mother, of her white, tear-stained face, of the long hours she had spent upon her knees, and how at last she prayed: "Lord! only to know that he is dead!"—yet she died ignorant.

Then did the devil come to me and whisper: "Of what use is it to have patience and faith? Does thy God bear thee in mind—or is his memory like that of the Prince thy father served? Dost thou still believe that He doeth all things well, and is there still trust in thy heart? Come, make friends of those who would aid thee—never mind a little lie! Wouldst be happy? Wouldst save thy dear love? Then cease thy vain prayers and take thy fate in thine own hands."

I rose up from my knees and looked out again upon the laughing waters,—I would do this evil thing that good might come. I would act a lying part, and soil my soul, so that I and my dear love might win freedom

and happiness. But I would pray no more—for I could not ask God's blessing on a lie.

Then I went slowly back to where my temptress waited.

"Doña Orosia," I said, "I take your offer. I am young—I would be happy; and you—you would be revenged! I am not the little fool you think me: I know you too well to believe that you would aid me out of love; I laugh at your pity; but I trust your hate!"

"*Bueno*," she said. "It is enough. We understand one another,—but I must teach thee the part, or thou wilt fail."

"I am not so simple, señora, I can feign love—for love's sake."

"Yet I would have thee set round with thorns, my sweet. The rose that is too easy plucked is not worth wearing. And do thou give only promises and never fulfil them,—I'd baulk him of every kiss he thinks to win!"

CHAPTER XVI.

A DAY went by, and though I had become even letter-perfect in my new rôle I had not the chance to play it to my audience; but it came at last.

It was in the long, dreamy hour of the early afternoon, when sleep comes easiest. Doña Orosia had ordered her couch to be placed in the shadiest part of the breezy garden, close against the gray stone wall. Designedly she chose the corner nearest the iron gate, through which we could command a portion of the sunny street; and here she lay and made me sing to her all the songs I knew, the while she dozed and waked again, and whiles teased her parrot into uttering discordant cries until for very anger I would sing no more.

Suddenly she laid aside her petulance, and with a quick, imperious gesture bade me take up the lute again; then, falling back among her pillows, she closed her eyes and let her bosom rise and fall with the gentle breathings of a sleeping child.

I hesitated in some astonishment; but again the sharp command hissed from her softly parted lips,—

"Sing, little fool!—Melinza passes!"

I touched the lute with shaking fingers and lifted my trembling voice. The notes stuck in my throat and came forth huskily at first; but then I thought on my dear love in his hateful prison, and I sung as I had never sung before.

Above the gray wall I saw Don Pedro's plumed hat passing by. He reached the gate and halted, gazing in with eager eyes. His quick glance compassed the green nook, passed over the sleeping figure, and fixed itself upon my face.

The song died away; I leaned forward, smiling, and laid a warning finger on my lip.

He made me a bow so courtly that the feather in his laced hat swept the ground.

"So, señorita, the caged bird can sing?"

"When her jailer wills it so, Don Pedro," I said softly, and smiled—and sighed—and gave a half-fearful glance over my shoulder; then added, in a lower whisper: "And when she wills otherwise, I must be silent."

"How, would she even keep a lock upon your lips?"

"Upon my lips—and my eyes also. Indeed,

my very brows are under her jurisdiction, and are oft constrained to frown, against their will!"

"So!" he exclaimed; and I saw a sweet doubt creep over his face. "Must I place to her account the many frowns you have bestowed on me?"

"*Si, señor*—and add to those some others that would not be coerced."

The fire in his black eyes frightened me not a little as he whispered:

"If that be true, then grant me the rose in your bosom, lady!"

I lifted a trembling hand to the flower, and shot a frightened glance at the señora's quivering lashes.

"Oh! I dare not!" I murmured, and let my hand fall against the lute upon my knee. The jangling strings roused the pretended sleeper from her dreams.

She half rose, and, seizing a pillow from her couch, hurled it at me, saying angrily: "Here is for such awkwardness!"

The soft missile failed of its proper mark; but found another in the green parrot, who was dangling, head downward, from his perch; and there was an angry squawk from the insulted bird.

I threw a timorous glance toward the gate-

way, motioning the intruder away. He would have lingered, being to all appearances greatly angered at the discourteous treatment of my lady warder; but prudence prevailed, and he fell back out of sight, with a hand upon his heart, protesting dumbly.

The comedy had just begun. Now it must be played through to the end.

It is a strange thing to see the zest with which my gentle jailer prepares, each day, an ambush for the unwary foe, and how he always falls into the trap—to be assailed by me with smiles, and soft complaints, piteous appeals for sympathy, and shy admissions of my tender friendship; which are always cut short by some well-contrived interruption or the sudden appearance of Doña Orosia on the scene. Though only a week has passed, already Don Pedro would take oath that I love him well.

Early this morning I heard him underneath my window; and I was right glad of the chance to smile on him from behind the protecting bars. This meeting had not been of Doña Orosia's contriving, so I thought I would use it for my own ends.

I vowed to him that I was unhappy—which was true. I protested that I was sick with longing for freedom—and that, too, was no lie.

But to that I added a whole tissue of falsehood, declaring that I had never drawn a free breath since I came into the world; that my uncle had been a tyrant, and the man to whom he had betrothed me was jealous and exacting; that I had been brought across the seas against my will; and that I dreaded the hardships of life in this new country. I said I had no wish to rejoin the English settlers, and I denied, with tears, any partiality for my dear love. Heaven forgive me! but I professed I loved Don Pedro better than any man I had ever seen, and I entreated him to take me away from these barbarous shores.

I had not thought that I could move him, yet, strange to say, the man seemed touched. I wondered as I listened to him, for I had thought him all bad, and deemed his passion but a passing fancy. He was speaking now of Habana, a city of some refinement, where, as his wife, I would enjoy the companionship of other ladies of my own station.

"I'd never suffer thee to live here, my fairest lady, where yon dark devil of a woman could vent her spite on thee!" he whispered softly; and my conscience smote me, for I was playing with a man's heart, of flesh and blood.

But I bethought me, if there was in truth any good in that heart, I would dare appeal to

it; for I mistrusted that at any time Doña Orosia would break her promised word.

"Truly, Don Pedro, I would go gladly, for I hate the very sight of these walls; but—if you love me—I would crave of your graciousness another boon. Set free the English gentleman who was my promised husband, and send him, with the other prisoners, back to his friends."

There was no answer, and I feared I had overstepped the mark; but I dared further.

"Señor de Melinza," I said, "it is true that I come of a race for which you have no love, and that I hold a creed which you condemn; nevertheless it must be remembered that we have our own code of chivalry, and there have lived and died in England as brave knights and true as even your valiant Cid. I would not have the man I am to wed guilty of an unknightly act. Therefore be generous. You have been mutually wounded; but it was in fair duello,"—this I said feigning ignorance of the coward blow that so nearly reached my dear love's heart,—"and now, Don Pedro, it would be the more honourable to set free the countryman of your promised bride and send him in safety to his friends."

"Señorita," said the Spaniard,—and there was a cloud upon his brow,—"I would you

had asked me any boon but this. Nevertheless I give you my knightly word that the man shall go, and go unharmed."

"I thank you, Don Pedro," I said, and fought down the cry of joy that struggled to my lips. Then, because I could find no other words, and feared to fail in the part I had to play, I took Dame Barbara's scissors and cut off a long lock of my yellow hair, bound it with riband, and threw it down to him as guerdon for the favour he had granted me.

This noon, when I joined the Governor's wife as usual under the vine-hung balcony, I boasted cheerfully of the promise I had wrung from Melinza; and she demanded at once to hear all that had passed between us,—then called me a fool for my pains!

"Little marplot! Had you shown less concern for the fate of your Englishman, it would have been vastly better. You do but cast obstacles in my way. There is nothing for me to do now but hotly to oppose his leaving! If needs must I will pretend a liking for the man myself, and vow to hold him as my guest yet a while longer, for the sake of his pretty wit and his gallant bearing,—any device to throw dust in their eyes, so that we seem not to be of the same minds and putting up the selfsame plea. Oh! little saint with the blue eyes, your *métier* is not diplomacy!"

"In sooth, señora, till you first taught me to dissemble I was unlessoned in the art."

She laughed then, and said that when I had less faith in others I could more easily deceive.

"If the little Margarita believed Melinza's pretty fable about Habana, and the excellent company there which his *wife* would enjoy, 'tis no wonder that she made a tangle of her own little web."

"But Doña Orosia, think you he would deal unfairly with me? His words rang so true—even a bad man may love honestly! And if I trifle with the one saving virtue in his heart, will it not be a grievous sin?"

The mocking smile died out of the Spaniard's eyes and left them fathomless and sombre.

I felt as one who—looking into an open window, and seeing the light of a taper glancing and flickering within—draws back abashed, when suddenly the flame is quenched, and only the hollow dark stares back at his blinded gaze.

"If he loves you," she said slowly, "it is but as he has loved before, more times than one. He would skim the cream of passion, brush the dew from the flower, crush the first sweetness from the myrtle-blooms,—and leave the rest. You child, what do you know of men? It is only the unattainable that is worth

striving for. There is much of the brute beast in their passions. Did you mark, the other day, how the dead hound turned a scornful nozzle to the first sweet morsel that I pressed on his acceptance? But afterward, the fear of losing it made him eager to the leaping-point. Just so I shall trick his master—shall let him see thee, *almost* grasp and taste; then, when the moment of mad longing comes, I'll stab him with the final loss of thee! Only so can I arouse a desire that will outlive a day; for I know men's hearts to the core, thou blue-eyed babe!"

"Señora," I cried, stung by her scornful words, "I cannot say I know men's hearts; but I do know the heart of one true gentleman; and I believe, when he had won from me the betrothal kiss, I was not less desirable in his eyes!"

"So you believe," she said, and shook her head. "*Bueno*, go on believing—while you can. Woman's faith in man's fealty lives just so long——" and she bent forward from her couch, plucked a fragile blossom from the swaying vines, and cast it under foot.

I would have spoken again of my trust in the leal true heart that trusted me; but I saw the trembling of the laces on her bosom, I saw the dark eyes growing more angerful, and

a slow crimson rising in the rich cheek. She was always "studying her revenge,"—this beautiful, unhappy woman, "keeping her wounds green which otherwise might heal and do well."

As I watched her a great pity overcame me, so that I held my peace.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE 20th of March—a day never to be forgot!

I have seen Mr. Rivers. It is the first time since that night—nine months ago. I have seen him and spoken with him in the presence of Melinza, Doña Orosia, and the Governor.

Whatever may befall us now, nothing can take away the memory of this last hour. If ever we leave these walls together and taste freedom again, it will have been dearly bought. A maid's truth tarnished, and the brave heart of a most loyal gentleman robbed of its faith! Dear God, what a price to pay!

'Twas noon when Doña Orosia came herself to fetch me.

"There is some deviltry afoot," she said. "I cannot fathom it as yet; but, as you hope for freedom for yourself and your Englishman, don't fail to play your part to the end. Come quickly! Melinza demands to see you, and the Governor permits it. Don't blame me, child—I can do nothing to prevent it. But, I warn you, act the part, whatever it may cost you."

I followed her, as in a dream, along the corridor, into the room where the old Governor sat in his arm-chair beside a carved table, whereon were a decanter of wine, glasses half drained, and a litter of playing-cards. He drummed upon the table with his withered fingers, and looked uneasily, first at his wife's flushed face as she entered the door, and then at the determined countenance of Melinza, who was standing before the heavy arras which divided that room from another in the rear.

"Doña Margarita," said the Governor, clearing his throat nervously, "is it so that you are detained within my house against your will?"

"Your Excellency," I began, and was thankful I could speak truth, "I, and all the other English, have been held here in San Augustin for many a long month against our will."

"Without the orders of the Spanish Council I could not liberate you, señorita; though now we purpose to do so, having authority. But concerning yourself—Melinza assures me that you do not desire to be sent with your countrymen."

I felt my heart grow cold. Must I still cling to the lie? I looked at Doña Orosia, whose black eyes flashed a warning.

"That is true, Señor de Colis," I said, and my voice sounded far off and strange.

"You would wish to remain here as my guest and companion, Margarita," said the Governor's wife in vehement tones.

I looked at her in wonder. What did they desire between them? My head swam, and I would have said Yes to her also; but her black eyes menaced me again. I drew a deep breath and shook my head. "No, please your Excellency."

Melinza smiled a slow triumphant smile. "Doña Orosia is unfortunate. I trust I shall be more successful. You would rather go to Habana as *my* companion,—is it not so, Margarita mia?"—and he stepped forward and held forth his hand to me.

One day in the early spring Doña Orosia had called me to see a new pet which had been brought to her, a young crocodile, loathsome and hideous; and she had forced me to touch the tethered monster as it crawled, the length of its chain, over the floor. I do remember the cold disgust I felt at the horrid contact; but it was as naught to the feeling that passed over me when I let the Spaniard take my hand.

He drew me toward him, laughing softly. "Who doubts that the lady goes willingly?" and lifted his voice with a defiant question in its ringing tones.

"I do, señor!"—and it was my dear love

who pushed aside the arras and came forward into the room,—my dear love, wasted by fever and long imprisonment, white and gaunt and spectral, yet bearing himself with all his olden dignity.

The Spaniard turned to meet him, holding me still within the circle of his arm. I gave one final glance at the Governor's wife and read my cue. After that I could see nothing but my love's white face.

"Have I lied to you, Señor Englishman? Do you believe, now, that I hold that golden tress as a pledge of future favours? The lady on whose faith you were ready to stake your soul is here to answer for herself, and she has thrown in her lot with me—with me, señor."

"Margaret—Margaret!" cried my dear love, "tell him he lies, sweetheart!"

I opened my lips, but the words died on my tongue. Again my poor love cried to me, holding out his arms. I saw his white face grow paler still, and he swayed uncertainly where he stood. Then, gathering all his strength, he threw himself upon the Spaniard and would have torn us apart, had not his weak limbs given way, so that he fell prone upon the floor.

Melinza's hand went to his sword; he drew the blade and held it to my dear love's throat.

"SPARE THE MAN, DON PEDRO! I LIKE NOT THE SIGHT OF BLOOD."—*Page 125.*

At last my voice came back to me; I laid my hand upon the Spaniard's arm. "Spare the man, Don Pedro! I like not the sight of blood!"

Then I saw mortal agony in a brave man's eyes. He made no move to rise, but lay there at my feet and looked at me.

"Margaret Tudor," he said, "do you love me still?"

I looked down at him. If I spoke truth, Melinza's blade would soon cut short his hearing of it. A wild laugh rose in my throat; I could not hold it back, and it rang out, merrily mad, in the silent room.

"Señores," I said, "Senores, I love a brave man, not a coward!" and that was truth, though none in that room read me aright, save Doña Orosia.

The man at my side laughed with me, and he at my feet gave me one look and swooned away.

Melinza sheathed his sword, saying, "Your Excellency, the prisoner appears convinced; so you can scarce doubt the evidence yourself."

The Governor cleared his throat again, and glanced helplessly toward his wife. She stepped forward with scornful composure and took my arm.

"Things are come to a pretty pass, Señor de Colis, when Don Pedro brings his prisoners under this roof and your wife is made a witness to a brawl. I crave your leave to withdraw; and I take this girl with me till the question of her guardianship is settled." Then, still holding me by the arm, she left the room; and neither of the two men ventured to stop our progress.

Arrived at my chamber Doña Orosia opened the door and thrust me in, bidding me draw the bolt securely.

I was left alone with my thoughts. Such thoughts as they are! I cannot weep; my eyes are hot and dry. There is no grief like unto this. Oh, my mother! when your beloved clasped you to his heart in that last farewell, there were between you thoughts of parting, of bodily pains to be borne, of scourgings and fetters,—aye, and of death. But what were those compared with what I have to bear, who am humbled in the sight of my dear love?

CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER writing these words I cast aside my pen, and, throwing myself upon the bed, buried my face in the pillow. I could feel the drumming pulses in my ears, and my heart swelled till it was like to burst within my bosom. Though I pressed my hot fingers against my close-shut eyes, I still could see my poor love's white, set face, the great hollows in his bearded cheeks, the blue veins on his thin temples, and the large eyes, one moment all love-lighted, the next, stricken with horror at the sight of my unfaith.

How long I lay there I can scarcely tell. It was many hours after noon when I heard heavy steps without my door, which suddenly began to shake as though one beat upon it with frantic hands.

"Who is there?" I cried, lifting my head.

"Oh! Mistress Margaret! a God's mercy—undo the door!"

I drew the bolt in haste, and Dame Barbara burst in and dropped down, weeping, at my feet.

"Lord love ye, Mistress Margaret! Lord

help us both this day! They have sent off all our men to meet the blessed English ship—and we two poor women left behind!"

I could not think it true. I seized the weeping dame by her heaving shoulders and fairly dragged her to her feet, demanding what proof she had that this was so. She pointed dumbly to the window, and fell a-sobbing louder than before.

Then I looked out.

The *Carolina* frigate stood off the bar of Matanzas Bay, and over the waves, in the direction of the frigate, went a small boat impelled by the brawny arms of six swarthy Spaniards. With them were the English prisoners: I saw the honest face of Captain Baulk, and next him worthy Master Collins; also the three seamen of the Barbadian sloop; and another, whom I did not know, but guessed to be the second of the two unlucky messengers; and—in the midst of all—my dear love.

He lay full length, his white face resting against the good captain's knees; and my first thought was one of terror lest he was dead: but I saw him lift himself, and give one long look at the castle walls, then fall back as before—and I knew, in that moment, he put me from his heart for ever.

They were gone, all gone. Doña Orosia

had played me false—God had turned His face from me—and the man I loved would never love me more.

I turned away from the window to the weeping dame, and I laughed, laughed again as I had done in the face of my dear love that very morn.

"The piece is near ended, dame," I said. "'Tis almost time to pray *God save His Majesty* and draw the curtain. But what strange tricks does Fate play sometimes with her helpless puppets! She did cast us, long ago, for a lightsome comedy, and lo! 'tis to be a tragedy instead! Think you, dear Barbara, that death would come easier by means of yonder bed-cord, or of those great scissors dangling at thy waist? Or, perhaps, if thou couldst play Othello to my Desdemona, it might seem a gentler prelude to the grave. How heavy is a lie, good dame? Think you it would drag a soul to hell? If so, I need not to go alone; for if I lied to Melinza, he also lied to me—and Doña Orosia also"— then a strong shudder shook my frame. "Barbara, Barbara, must I e'en have their company for all eternity?"

She ran to me, good soul, and hushed me like a child to her ample bosom.

"Lord help ye, dear lamb! And He will—

He will!" I heard her say over and over; then everything turned dark before my eyes, and I thought death had come to me indeed.

When consciousness returned I lay upon my bed in a gray twilight, and beside me were Dame Barbara and the Governor's wife.

As my eyes fell upon Doña Orosia, I cried out bitterly that I had been a fool to trust even to her hate; for now she had grown weary of her revenge, and would discard her tool without paying the price for it.

She covered my mouth with her hand, laughing shortly.

"Melinza thinks he has been too sharp for me. He despatched the prisoners in great haste to the English ship without my knowledge. I went to him just now and demanded to know if he dared to send away Señor Rivers without leave from me.

"'Aye,' he said, and bowed to me. 'Since Doña Orosia desired for some reason to detain him here, I thought it best to be rid of him at once; but the girl remains.'

"'The girl remains in my guardianship,' said I.

"'Until to-morrow,' Melinza answered. 'To-morrow the *Virgen de la Mar* returns to Habana, and with her go the English girl and your humble servant.'

"'The Governor,' I cried, 'will not permit it!'

"'Will he not? Ask him,' said Melinza, 'ask his Excellency the Governor of San Augustin!' Then he laughed at me—*Dios!* he laughed at me!"

She bit her red lip at the remembrance, and clenched her white hands.

"And did you ask the Governor, señora?"

She nodded fiercely. "The old dotard! He did but shrug his shoulders and offer me a diamond necklace in exchange for my pretty puppet of a plaything. It is plain Melinza has some hold upon him, what it is I cannot guess; but it is stronger than my wishes. He would sooner brave my anger than oppose his nephew's schemes."

I watched the dark shadow settling on her brow, and I thought all hope was over.

"Doña Orosia," I said at last, "will you lend me your dagger?"

"Not yet, child—not unless there is no other way to thwart them both. Look—" she said, and threw a purse of gold pieces on the bed beside me. "This is your purchase money, and 'twill serve to buy assistance. When I could make no better terms, I was forced to take this and a kiss to boot—Pah!" and she rubbed her cheek. "To-morrow,

when the tide is full, the *Virgen de la Mar* will leave the harbour. Before then I must contrive your escape."

"And Barbara's," I added, for I could see the poor dame was in deep anxiety.

Doña Orosia stared. "Upon my soul, we had all forgotten the old woman. She might have gone well enough with the other prisoners; but how am I to smuggle *two* women from the town?"

Then I besought her not to separate me from the dame, to whom I clung as my last friend; and after a time she yielded me a grudging promise and left me, bidding me make ready for the evening meal, at which I must appear in order not to arouse the Governor's suspicions.

My hands were cold and trembling; but with Barbara's aid I decked me out in one of the gay gowns which had been given me by my protectress, and, taking up a fan—with which I had learned the Spanish trick of screening my face upon occasion—I joined the Governor and his beautiful spouse in the brightly lighted *comedor*, where covers at table were laid for three. I was thankful for Melinza's absence, for to play at love-making that night would have been beyond my powers.

At first I could eat nothing; but an urgent

glance from Doña Orosia, and the thought of what need there would be for all my strength prompted me to force some morsels, in spite of the convulsive swelling of my throat. I made shift, also, to answer when addressed by either host or hostess; but the Governor was in no great spirits himself and seemed to stand in some awe of his lady's frown.

Suddenly, without the door, sounded voices in altercation, and a servant entered, protesting with many apologies that there was a reverend father without who demanded to see his Excellency at once on a matter that would brook no delay.

The Governor leaned back in his chair with an air of great annoyance; but Doña Orosia said quickly, "Bid the father enter."

A tall form in a friar's dark habit appeared on the threshold. I recognized, under the cowl, the thin, sallow face and the sombre eyes. I had seen them at the door of the chapel in the castle courtyard on the night of our arrival, and many times since. They belonged to Padre Felipe, the confessor of the Governor's wife, and her adviser, I believed, in affairs temporal as well as spiritual. Something told me he had come hither at her bidding, and I glanced at her for confirmation; but Doña Orosia leaned with one elbow on the

table, her chin upon her white hand, the other rounded arm outstretched with an almond in the slim fingers for the delectation of the green parrot on his perch beside her. Not a flicker of interest was visible on her beautiful, sullen face; so I turned away with some disappointment to hear what the padre was saying.

His voice was low-pitched and husky, and I could scarce distinguish what he said, save that it concerned someone who was ill—nay, *dead*, it seemed, and needing instant burial.

The Governor listened with a gathering scowl upon his face, till suddenly he started up with such haste that his chair fell backward with a noisy clatter.

"*Santa Maria!* Dead of the black vomit? And you come hither with the vile contagion clinging to your very garments!"

"Nay," said the friar's deep, hollow voice, as he lifted a reassuring hand. "I have changed my robes. You and yours are in no danger, my son."

"In no danger!" repeated the Governor, his face becoming purple and his voice choked; "no danger, when the foul carcass lies unburied, tainting the very air with death! Throw it over in the sea—nay, set fire to the miserable hut in which it lies, and let all be consumed together!"

"Who is it that is dead?" asked Doña Orosia. She had risen, and stood with one hand holding back her skirts, her full, red upper lip slightly drawn, and her delicate nostrils dilated, as though the very mention of the loathly disease filled her with disgust.

"A wretched half-breed boy, some thieving member of the padre's flock," exclaimed the Governor impatiently. "Set fire to the hut, I say!"

But Doña Orosia interrupted once again. "Padre, what is it that you desire?"

The sombre eyes were turned on her for the first time. "The boy was a Christian, my daughter, and I would give him Christian burial."

"Surely," said Doña Orosia. "What is to prevent?"

"Would you spread the infection through the town?" exclaimed the Governor, white with fear.

"Nay," said the friar, "I ask but a permit to take the body without the gates. None but I and a few of my followers need be exposed to danger. Let a bell be rung before us, to warn all in the streets to stand away; and we will carry a vessel of strong incense before the bier. Those who go out with me, I pledge you my word, shall not

return for some days till they are free of all taint themselves."

"My plan is better,—to burn hut, corpse, and all," replied the Governor. But Padre Felipe turned on him fiercely.

"How shall I keep my hold upon my people, and they retain their faith in consecrated things, if you treat a Christian's body as you would the carcass of a dog?"

"As you will," the Governor exclaimed; and, throwing himself into a chair, he called for pen and paper. "Here," he added presently, "deliver this to Don Pedro de Melinza, and bid him warn the sentries at the gate. Say, furthermore, that if any one in the town comes within twenty paces of the bier, out of the gate he shall go also."

The friar received the permit silently, lifted his hand in benediction, and left the apartment.

As my glance returned from the doorway it met that of Doña Orosia, and in hers there was a passing flash of triumph. Soon after, she rose, and together we withdrew. I felt her hand upon my arm tighten convulsively; but I walked on with the same sense of unreality that had oppressed me all the day.

When we reached my chamber she bade me change my dress again for something dark

and warm; for the night air was damp and chill. As I did so I slipped within my bosom the roll of closely written pages containing these annals of my prisonment. Then I asked for Barbara, and Doña Orosia quietly replied,—

"She has gone upon an errand and will join us in due time." Then she threw a mantle over my head, wrapped herself in another, and led me out into the garden.

CHAPTER XIX.

IT was a moonless night, and a haze of cloud obscured the stars. We passed silently under the vine-covered arbour, across the garden, to the gateway. Into the heavy lock Doña Orosia slipped a great key; it turned easily, the door swung open, and we stepped out. Locking it once more, my companion took my arm and hurried me along the dark, deserted street. We turned a corner, came upon an open square, and paused beside a huge palmetto that grew near the centre. I heard the crisp rustle of its leaves in the night wind, and I shivered with a nameless dread.

Then, through the darkness, two dim forms approached us. My heart beat quickly, and I drew the mantle closer round my face; but one of them proved to be the friar, the other, my dear, dear Barbara. I sprang to meet her with a quick cry; but Doña Orosia laid a hand upon my lips and hurried me on. Padre Felipe now led the way, and we followed him for some moments more until he paused before a low doorway and motioned us to enter.

"Señora," I whispered, "why do you come?"

I have no fear of the disease, but why should you needlessly expose yourself?'

"Little fool," she answered, pushing me gently on, "there is no fever, no contagion here."

Wondering still, I entered the narrow passage, and beyond it a dimly lighted room.

On the floor lay a long wooden stretcher covered with hide; at its foot and head, fixed each in a rude socket, were two candles, still unlighted. A brass pot with long chains, and a heap of dark cloth, lay upon the floor; there was also a rough table on which stood a bottle of water and a loaf of bread; otherwise, except for a dim lamp upon the wall, the room was empty. Doña Orosia looked around, with quick eyes taking in every detail; then she turned to Padre Felipe.

"Can you trust the bearers?"

He bowed his head.

"Then the only difficulty is this old woman. Better to leave her behind."

But again I pleaded most earnestly; and presently the friar left the room and returned soon after with a dingy cloak, with which he enveloped the poor dame from head to foot.

"Let her follow behind," he said, "and if there is no trouble she may pass out with us." He charged her, then, to keep her face hidden

and to stand well away from the light of the candles.

After that there was a pause, and the Spanish woman and the friar looked at each other.

"See you do not fail!" she said.

"And remember your word," he replied.

"A solid silver service for the new mission chapel at San Juan,—I swear it," was the quick response; "that is, if you succeed."

The friar folded his arms silently.

"Nay, then, in any case! only do your utmost," whispered Doña Orosia hurriedly.

"The result is as God wills it," said Padre Felipe calmly, and, pointing to the stretcher, he bade me lie down upon it. I did so, trembling in every limb, and he would have covered me over with the wrappings when the Governor's wife pushed him aside, knelt down herself, and slipped into my hand a little dagger, whispering:

"In case you are discovered."

I hid it in my bosom, thanking her. "Farewell, señora," I said, with tears, "you have been kind to me and I am very grateful. Whether or not I win freedom and friends, I believe you have done your utmost for me. I cannot think"—and I lifted my head close to hers and whispered—"I cannot think it is for revenge alone. There must be some pity prompting it."

"Thou little foolish one," she said, and laughed, pushing me back upon the bier. Then suddenly I felt a hot tear drop upon my forehead. She stooped lower and kissed me on the cheek.

I gave a little cry and would have risen again; but she drew the dark coverings over me and I could see no longer. As I felt her soft hands tucking me in, as a mother would her babe, I could only weep silently and pray God bless her.

A pungent smoke of something burning filled the room and reached me even through the coverings. I heard the padre lighting the tapers at my head and feet. After a time the stretcher on which I lay was lifted up and carried, foot foremost, from the room—out of the passage and into the street. I heard the feet of my bearers pattering on the ground as we moved onward at a swinging pace; I was conscious of the heavy smoke of burning incense that enveloped us; I heard the sound of a bell going before me, and a voice raised in a steady cry of warning; but I could see nothing save a faint radiance through the wrappings, where the candles burned.

After a time there was a halt and I heard voices in dispute. My fingers closed around the hilt of the señora's dagger. If death must

come, so be it! I thought, and felt no fear, only regret that my dear love could never understand, unless the spirit that quivered so wildly within my still and shrouded form could speed to him in the first moment of its freedom and whisper the truth to his heart!

Another voice joined in. It was Melinza's own.

"Stand back!" he called loudly. "Out of the way, slaves! Who dares dispute the orders of his Excellency? If a man goes within twenty paces of that leprous crew he may follow them to perdition; but there'll be no longer any room for him within these walls!"

A murmur rose, and died away in the distance. We moved on once more. Then sounded the rattling clang of iron bars—but it came from behind us. The bell had ceased to ring; but as we moved slowly on I heard the voice of the padre chanting in a low and solemn key. Then utter silence fell, except the unshod footfall of my bearers and a murmur as of night-winds in the trees. Suddenly an owl hooted overhead, and then——I must have fainted.

I thought I was again in the Barbadian sloop, during the storm. Bound in my narrow

berth I rocked and swayed, while overhead the boisterous wind howled in the rigging. The strained timbers creaked and groaned, and now and then sounded the sharp snapping of some frail spar. A woman's sobbing reached me through it all,—the low, gasping sobs of one whose breath is spent. I pushed back the covers and looked around me.

It was gray dawn in the forest. Through the tossing branches overhead I saw the pale clouds scudding beneath an angry heaven. I looked toward my feet and perceived the back of a strange man with dark head, bent shoulders, and bare brown arms grasping the sides of my litter. Some one was at my head also; turning quickly, I met his eyes looking into mine: it was Padre Felipe. I sat up, with a sudden gasp.

"Barbara!" I cried, "where are you, Barbara?"

When only the weak sobs answered me I threw myself from the litter to the ground, falling in an impotent heap with my feet entangled in the wrappings. But I caught sight of my good dame staggering on behind, half dragged, half carried by two Indian youths. Her clothing was torn and draggled, her face pitiably scratched, while great tears chased each other down her wrinkled cheeks.

The litter had stopped. Padre Felipe helped me to my feet; but I turned from him and threw my arms around Barbara's neck. She clung to me desperately, her breath catching and her voice broken as she tried to speak.

The friar took her by the shoulder roughly.

"She is worn out with tramping through the woods all night. It is no wonder! But 'twas her own doing, for she would come; now she must keep up or be left behind. We must reach shelter before the storm breaks in earnest, for it will be no light one."

A heavier gust passed while he was speaking; there was a louder moan in the tree-tops, and a broken branch crashed down at our very feet.

"Have we much farther to go?" I asked. He shook his head.

"About a league, perhaps?"

"Not more," was his reply.

"Then put the poor dame in the litter, and I will walk."

He looked intently at me. "Can you do it?"

"Better than she. I feel faint here," I added, laying my hand upon my bosom, "but my limbs are young and strong and unwearied."

"You want food," was his brief comment; and, turning to the litter, he drew out from a concealed pouch that was slung beneath it, a bottle of water and a loaf of bread, and gave me to drink and to eat. I took it gladly, and Barbara did likewise. I thought, then, he would have taken some himself; but he put by the remainder, saying he had no need of it, and signed to the old woman to take her place in the litter, which was then raised by two of his followers. The third went in advance to clear away obstacles from the path, and we followed behind, I clinging to the padre's arm.

He said no more to me, but the touch of his hand was not ungentle. I marked how he led me over the smoothest ground, choosing the briars himself, though his feet were bare, and shielding me with his arm from the sharp blades of the dwarf palmettos that hedged the way.

As I walked beside him I could but marvel at the strange turns of Fate; for now it seemed that I would owe my deliverance, in part, to one of the very class I most hated as being the first cause of our captivity. From time to time I glanced up at his dark, stern face, and wondered whether, if I had not chanced to be his charge and under his sworn protection, he could have found it in his heart to burn me for a heretic!

CHAPTER XX.

THE light grew ever stronger behind the hurrying clouds, but the deep places in the forest held their shadows still. Tall cypress-trees reared their heads amid the hollows and spread their branches like a wide canopy over our heads; huge live-oaks crowned the hummocks; and here and there great laurels lifted their pyramids of glossy, dark-green foliage. Our passage was frequently obstructed by fallen logs, mossed over with the growth of years; and tangles of vine, tough-stemmed and supple, flung themselves from tree to tree across our path, resisting our advance. All through the forest's higher corridors howled the riotous wind; but along the tunneled ways we traveled it was scarce perceptible at times.

In spite of my fatigue I felt a greater strength rising within me. We had come so far without pursuit! I began to hope as I had never done before; for was not my dear love free, and my face also set toward friends?

As I mused thus we reached a higher level, and, through a rent in the stormy sky a shaft of morning sunlight glanced across my shoulder

and plunged forward into the woods beyond. I looked back, startled, and for a brief moment saw the sun's golden disc; then a black cloud effaced it from the sky.

"Padre!" I cried, "we are travelling westward!"

"Yes," he said calmly.

"Westward!" I exclaimed again. "Westward—and inland! when the English settlement lies to the north of us, upon the coast!"

He bowed again in silent acquiescence. Then my indignation broke forth, and without stopping for further question I accused him bitterly of breach of trust.

"Did you not promise Doña Orosia to deliver me to my friends?" I cried.

"What cause have you to doubt my good faith?" he asked, turning his sombre eyes toward me, but still speaking in the same calm tones. "Had I a ship at San Augustin in which we could set sail? Or could such a ship have left the harbour unperceived? Not even a canoe could have been obtained there without danger of discovery. We have a long journey before us,—could we set out upon it unprovisioned?"

I hung my head, ashamed of my doubts. Once it was not my nature to be suspicious; but so much of trouble had come to me of late

that I began to fear I would never again feel the same confidence in my fellow creatures, the same implicit trust in Heaven that I had held two years ago. I had never been a stranger to trouble; but, as a child, I knew it only as a formless cloud that cast its shadow sometimes on my path, dimming the sunlight for a moment and hushing the song upon my lips. Even when my mother died I was too young for more than a child's grief—an April shower of tears; and although my earliest maidenhood was often lonely, I had made me my own happiness with bright imaginings, and prayed God to bring them to pass. So I awaited my future always with a smile and never doubted that it would be fair. All that had gone by. Trouble had shown its face to me, and I knew it for something terrible and strong, ready to leap at my throat and crush life out of me. What wonder, then, that I walked fearfully from hour to hour?

Padre Felipe spoke again after a time. "The woods are thinning," he said. "A few more steps and we shall come out on the shores of the San Juan, near to a small village of the Yemassees, in which there are many whose eyes have been opened to the truth. There we shall find shelter from the storm, and means to pursue our journey when the

clouds are past. Let us hasten; the bearers with the litter are far ahead."

He gave me his arm once more, and ere many minutes were past, we came in sight of the bold stream of the San Juan and the crowded huts of an Indian village.

The settlement did not appear to be near so large as that at Santa Catalina, nor did the buildings seem of as great size and commodiousness. The most imposing edifice I took to be the mission chapel, for before it was the great cross mounted aloft. It was circular in shape, with mud walls, and a thatched roof rising to an apex. There was a door in the side, of heavy planks battened strongly together; but I could perceive no windows, only a few very small square apertures, close under the eaves, for light and air.

The clouds were beginning to spill great drops upon our heads, so we quickened our steps into a run. The litter and its bearers had paused beside the door of the chapel, and from the neighbouring huts several Indians emerged and advanced to meet us. A young woman with a little copper-coloured babe strapped to her back, its tiny head just visible over her shoulder, peered at us from the low doorway of her mud-walled dwelling, but meeting my eyes, drew back hastily out of sight.

I was very weary, and Barbara, who had dismounted from the litter, seemed unable to stand. The padre was holding converse with those of his dark-skinned flock who had approached; so we two women crouched down under the chapel eaves and gazed around us at the wind-tossed, rain-blurred scene.

Before us was a thick grove of trees; to the left we could catch glimpses of the river, gray and angry like the sky, and all along its banks the huddled dwellings of the poor barbarians, whose ideals of architecture were no whit better than those of the wasp,—not near so complex as those of the ant and the bee.

Suddenly, while we waited there forlorn, my thoughts flew back to an English home, with its ivied walls, its turreted roof, its long façade of warm red brick. I saw green slopes, broad terraces, a generous portal, and a spacious hall; I thought of a room with an ample chimney set round with painted tiles, and I pictured myself kneeling upon the bearskin rug before a blazing fire, with my head upon my mother's knee and her fingers toying with my hair. For that moment I forgot even my dear love, and I would have given all the world just to be a little child at home.

The padre turned to us at last and motioned us to follow him. He led us to the rear of the

chapel, where, plastered against the wall, was a semicircular excrescence,—a tiny cell, with a narrow door hewn from a single plank and fastened with a heavy padlock. Drawing forth a key from his belt he unlocked this and bade us enter. We did so, and he closed the door behind us.

Within, the hard earth floor was slightly raised and covered with mats of woven palmetto-leaves. A narrow chink in the wall admitted a faint ray of light, enabling us to perceive dimly the few objects which the room contained. Apparently it was Padre Felipe's sleeping apartment and the chapel vestry combined in one. There was a curtained doorway that gave access to the chapel itself; pushing aside the hangings, we could see the dim interior, empty except for the high altar set with tall candles, and a carven crucifix upon the wall.

As I caught sight of these emblems of a Christian faith I bethought me of the bloody sacrifices that had been offered to a pitiful God in the name of orthodoxy, and I wondered whether heretics like us would not be safer out in the wild woods and the driving storm—aye, even at the mercy of infidel barbarians; but suddenly I remembered the solid silver service which was to be the gift of Doña Oro-

sia to this little new mission, and I took courage.

The rain was now pouring in torrents from the thatched roof, and the wind, which blew from the northeast, dashed it back against the mud walls of our refuge. I turned to Barbara and gave voice to an anxiety that for some time, had been growing within me.

"Dear dame," I said, "think you this storm is worse at sea?"

"Aye, my lamb, 'tis from an ugly quarter; but the *Carolina* has weathered harder blows, and haply she has found good anchorage in some safe harbour."

I tried to think the same; nevertheless, in the long hours that we sat there, listening to the heavy gusts and beating rain, my heart went faint at the possibility of this new danger to my beloved.

It must have been past noon when the padre came to us again. He brought food with him freshly cooked,—meat and fish, and broth of parched corn-flour, not unpleasant to the taste.

"The wind is abating," he declared, "and the clouds are breaking away. When the rain ceases we may venture to pursue our journey."

I begged to know how he purposed to con-

vey us, for neither Barbara nor I could go afoot much longer.

Then he laid his plans before us. This wide river, the San Juan, flowing by the settlement, continues northward for many miles and then curves eastward and empties itself into the sea. We were to start in two swift canoes—piraguas, he styled them—and, keeping at first under the lee of the shore, follow the river to its mouth, then proceed up the coast along the safe passage afforded by an outlying chain of islands. It would be a journey of about ten days to the Indian settlement at Santa Helena; the Indians there, he explained, were allies of our English friends and would doubtless aid us to rejoin them.

I asked if we must pass by Santa Catalina; and he said 'twas on our way, but no one there would hinder us while we were under his protection.

"Unless," he added, "the Governor of San Augustin sends out a ship to intercept us there, or anywhere upon the way; in which case there will be naught for me to do but give you up to him."

Upon that I was in a fever to be gone; for I felt that the day could not pass by without Melinza's discovering my flight, and I would endure any hardship rather than risk his intercepting us.

CHAPTER XXI.

It was not until the rain-clouds had all passed by that the padre chose to embark. The wind was still high, and our frail canoes were roughly cradled on the river's turbulent bosom.

Padre Felipe, Barbara, and I, with two Indians, filled the smaller of the two piraguas; the other held five Indians and a store of provisions for the journey.

The afternoon sky was naught but windy gloom; white clouds rolled over us in billowy folds, and tattered scarves of mist trailed lower still and seemed almost to snare their fringes on the topmost branches of the forest. Close under the protecting river-bank sped our light canoes, cutting their way through the gray waters. The dark-skinned crews bent to the paddle silently, with corded muscles tightening in their lean brown arms, and still, impassive faces fixed upon the seething current or the swiftly flying shores.

The gloom deepened slowly with the coming of the night. The waters darkened, the dun forest became black and vague. At last,

to my eyes, it seemed that the sailing shadows in the sky, the inky, swirling stream, and the mysterious shores blended in one all-pervading impenetrable midnight. I could not realize that we were moving; it seemed, rather, that we alone were still, while over us and around us the spirits of the night flew past. I felt the wind of unseen wings lifting my hair; I heard the splash and gurgle of strange creatures swimming by. With my hands close locked on Barbara's arm, and wide eyes staring into nothingness, I waited for some human sound to break the palpitating silence.

Finally the padre spoke. He asked some question in the Indian tongue. One of the rowers grunted in reply, and there was a sudden cessation of the rapid paddle-strokes. Then a signal was given to the other canoe, and after some further discussion I felt that we approached the shore. There was a scraping, jarring sound, followed by the soft trampling of feet upon a marshy bank; and then a hand drew me up and guided me to land.

"The tide is running too strongly against us," explained the voice of Padre Felipe. "We will rest an hour or two and wait for it to turn."

They kindled a fire somehow and spread

a blanket upon the damp ground. I remember that Barbara and I stretched ourselves upon it and I laid my head against the dame's shoulder,—then weariness overcame me.

It seemed the very next moment that I was roused; but the fire was out, and in the sky glimmered a few dim stars. There was a strange calm reigning as we re-embarked; for the wind had died and the whole aspect of the night had changed. All around us a faintly luminous sky lifted itself above the dense horizon line, and the broad bosom of the river paled to the hue of molten lead. Still brighter grew the heavens; the thin clouds drew aside, and the crescent of a waning moon spilled glory over us. And now our dark piraguas sped over the surface of a silver stream, and every paddle-blade dripped diamonds.

It is a noble river, this San Juan, with its broad sweeps and curves. At times it widens to a lake, and again thrusts itself into the shores as though its waters filled the print of some giant hand that in ages past had rested heavily with outspread fingers on the yielding soil. Aided by the strong current we glided on as swiftly as the passing hours. Our faces were set eastward now, and I waited, breathless, for the day to wake.

There was a slow parting of the filmy skies, as though Dawn's rosy fingers brushed aside the curtains of her couch; then came a gleam of golden hair that slid across her downy pillows. A long-drawn sigh shivered across the silent world, and with a sudden dazzlement we saw—

—"the opening eyelids of the Morn."

From the southwest a fresh wind arose and swept clean the blue heavens; and, with the early sunbeams sparkling on the ripples of the tide, the canoes darted on toward the river's mouth. A heron flew up from the marshes suddenly, and sailed over our heads on its strong white wings. As I watched it dip out of sight in the river far beyond us I caught sight of another gleaming wing that slowly unfurled itself toward the sky.

Touching the padre's arm, I pointed to it.

"A sail!" he said.

Our canoes quickly sought the curve of the shore and crept with caution toward the unknown vessel.

"It can scarcely be the Habana ship," murmured the padre, "for the *Virgen de la Mar* was at anchor in the harbour when we left San Augustin, and ere morning the storm had risen, so she would hardly have ventured forth to sea."

"There are other vessels carrying sail that

ply between the fort and these coast islands. We came from Santa Catalina aboard one of them," I whispered.

"Yes," said the padre, "but this is too large." He paused for some moments, and then added: "Do you see the long, straight lines of her hull, and the square stern? This is no Spanish galley, but a frigate of English build."

"'Tis the *Carolina!*" I exclaimed, "'tis the *Carolina!*"

"Oh! the blessed, blessed English ship!" sobbed the good dame.

Then all energies were bent to reach her, for it was plain that she was making ready to leave her anchorage.

"If we could only signal to those on board!" I cried. "Loose your neck-kerchief, Barbara, and wave it—wave it in the sunlight!"

"We are too close to the shore," the padre said. "She can scarce distinguish us until we strike out into the open."

"But how plainly we can perceive her crew! And see the stir upon the decks—are they not drawing up the anchor? Oh, Padre Felipe!" I cried piteously, "wave to them! signal them! or they will leave us after all!"

The friar rose carefully to his feet; he, too, was heartily glad of this chance to be rid of

his charges, and in no mind to let it slip by. With Barbara's white kerchief in his hand he was about to make another effort to attract the notice of the *Carolina*, when suddenly he glanced over his shoulder toward the land, his hand fell quickly to his side, and he dropped back into his seat with an exclamation of dismay.

One of the Indians rose immediately, and with shaded eyes gazed along the beach as it stretched away southward to San Augustin. He gave a grunt of acquiescence and sat down, and the motion of the paddles ceased.

"What have you seen?" I cried in agony, struggling also to my feet.

We were so near the river's mouth—almost upon the blue waves of the ocean rolling out to the shining east! Under the lee of the northern shore lay the English ship; and south of us the coast spun out its gleaming line of sandy beach away, away back to the prison we had left. But what were those dark forms that swarmed the sands?

"We are too late!" muttered the Spanish friar. "Discovering your flight, they have not waited for calm weather to follow in a swift sailing-vessel, as I had thought they would, but have sent out a search-party afoot to overtake you at the outset."

"But we must reach the *Carolina* before they arrive, Padre!"

"It can be done, easy enough," he answered, "but what shall I and my followers do if we are seen? Girl, I have too much at stake! I choose not to incur the Governor's anger. 'Tis not likely that they connect us with your disappearance, for Doña Orosia swore to shield me in the matter. I have done all I could. It is thus far and no farther. But you may yet escape; 'tis only a little distance to the ship; take up the paddles and make your way thither."

As he spoke he stepped from our canoe to the larger one which had closed up with us, and the two Indians followed him.

"Padre! oh, Padre! Do not leave me, do not desert me!"

They paid no heed to my appeal save to give a mighty shove to our canoe that sent it out toward midstream; then, seizing their paddles, with swift strokes they sent their own piragua speeding up the river.

It had all passed so quickly—so suddenly our hopes had been destroyed! Barbara and I had been thrown forward by the impetus given to our frail boat, and we cowered down in silence for a moment. The current was still bearing us outward; but every second

our motion slackened: we would never reach the ship without some effort on our part.

I seized a paddle and worked vigorously; but the light boat only swung round and round.

"Barbara!" I cried, "take the other paddle and work with me. I can do nothing all alone!"

The dame obeyed me, sobbing and praying under her breath; but we made sorry work of it.

I looked shoreward and could see our pursuers drawing closer and closer; they had not yet perceived us, but in a moment more they could not fail to do so. As they drew still nearer, riding on his dappled gray in the midst of them, I recognized Melinza! With him were a troop of Spanish soldiers—I saw the sunlight flashing on their arms—and some twenty half-naked Indians, who might so easily swim out and drag us back to land!

"They see us! Mistress Margaret, they see us!" shouted Barbara.

"Oh! not yet, dame, not yet!" I groaned, plying the paddle wildly.

"The English, my lamb—the English see us! Look you, they are putting out a boat from the ship!"

It was true; but ere I could utter a "Thank

God!" a yell from the shore told us that those fiends had seen us also. Barbara would have dropped her paddle in despair, but I ordered her sternly to make what play she could. As for me, I dipped my blade now on one side, now on the other; the trick of it had come to me like an inspiration; my fingers tightened their hold, and my arms worked with the strength born of a great terror.

Our pursuers had reached the river-shore, and a swarm of dark forms now threw themselves into the stream. But the long-boat from the frigate came toward us rapidly; I saw white English faces and heard shouts of encouragement in my mother tongue.

Then a volley of musketry rang out from the land. Instantly, the frigate made response; her heavy guns thundered forth, and the white smoke wreathed her like a cloud. But all the shots were falling short.

Nearer came the long-boat, yet nearer was the foremost swimmer. I saw his brown arms cleaving the clear tide, I saw the white eyeballs gleaming in his dark face. Friends and foes were now so close together that from the shore it was impossible to distinguish them; so the shots had ceased, and in their place rang out wild curses and savage yells. A sinewy brown hand rose from the water and seized the edge

"NEARER CAME THE LONG BOAT, YET NEARER WAS THE FOREMOST SWIMMER."—*Page 162.*

of our frail canoe, tilting it far over. The sudden jerk destroyed my balance, and in a moment I felt the waters close over my head.

Strong hands grasped me as I rose again and I battled fiercely; for I thought the Indian had me in his hold, and I chose rather, to die. But my weak strength was overcome, and I was lifted—aye, thank God!—lifted into the English boat, and Master Collins wiped the water from my face.

I saw them drag the dame in also, and then I closed my eyes. I did not faint,—never in all my life had I been so very much alive; but the sunlight and the blue sky were too bright for me.

I cannot tell much of what followed. There were a few more shots, and one of the English sailors dropped his oar and held up a bleeding hand. I sought my kerchief to bind it up for him, but I could not find it. And then, I looked up and saw the *Carolina* close beside us. A ringing cheer went up to heaven, and kind hands raised me to the deck. The sunburnt face of Captain Brayne bent over me, and there were tears in his honest eyes.

CHAPTER XXII.

THERE were other women on the ship, and one of them came forward and led me away to her cabin and aided me to rid myself of my drenched garments, lending me others in their stead. I learned from her that the *Carolina* had come direct from Barbadoes, bearing freight and some very few passengers,—the noise of our treatment at the Spaniards' hands deterring many who would else have ventured to throw in their lot with the young colony. Captain Brayne bore also the duplicate of the orders of the Spanish Council—which had been forwarded from England to Barbadoes; and he had been instructed by their Lordships the Proprietors, to stop at San Augustin and demand the prisoners.

All this my new friend told me during her kindly ministrations. She asked, also, many questions concerning my escape and the treatment I had received during our long captivity; but I was too exhausted to answer these at length, and begged that I might be left awhile to rest. She went away then, to get me a sooth-

ing potion from the ship's surgeon; and I made haste to unwrap the little packet that had lain hidden in my bosom, in which was the written story of my prison life. As I smoothed out the damp pages I thought of how I would place it in my dear love's hand and leave him to read all that my tongue could never say to him!

I slept for some hours and woke refreshed. Then came a message from the captain, asking if I would see him. I was eager to be out, for many reasons, the chief being my desire to see him from whom I had been so long parted; it was his face I sought first among the many familiar ones that crowded round me. Besides Captain Brayne I recognized other officers of the *Carolina* as the same with whom I had sailed from the Downs nearly two years ago. All my fellow prisoners—save one—greeted me joyfully and kindly. But that one missing face—where was it?

It was on my tongue to ask for Mr. Rivers; then, of a sudden, it came over me *how* we had parted. So! and he still believed me—that thing which I had shown myself. He had nursed his doubts for two whole days and nights, and now he would not even come forward to touch my hand and wish me joy of my escape. It seemed to me I caught glances

of pity passing between one and another of the lookers-on. Did they wait to see how Margaret Tudor would bear her lover's apathy? A jilted maid!

There was a mist before my eyes; but I smiled and said little gracious words of thanks to each and all of them, and wished in my heart that I was dead. Oh, my love! whatever doubts you may have had of me were paid back that cruel moment in full measure. I recalled some of the hard speeches I had heard from the embittered Spanish woman, and I thought within myself, All men are made after the same pattern!

Captain Brayne and Master Collins and good old Captain Baulk of the *Three Brothers* had been in earnest conversation for some moments; and now the *Carolina's* commander came to me and took me gently by the hand, leading me aside.

"Mistress Margaret," he said, "there is one aboard this ship to whom your coming may mean life instead of death. He is very ill,—so ill that we despaired of him till now,—and one name is ever on his lips. Are you too weak and unstrung, my dear young lady, to go with me to his sick bed?"

That was how the truth came to me. I cannot write of what I felt.

"Take me to him," I said.

He lay in his berth; his large eyes were alight with fever, and he was talking ceaselessly, now in broken whispers, now with a proud defiance in his husky tones.

"God knows what the devils did to him," murmured Henry Brayne. "He was once a proper figure of a man; but starvation and ill usage have worn him to a shadow!"

Aye, but a shadow with a gnawing sorrow at its heart.

"You may taunt me, Señor de Melinza," whispered the broken voice, "you may taunt me with my helplessness. I may not break these bonds, it is true; but neither can you sever those that bind to me the love of a true-hearted English maid. . . . That is a foul lie, Don Pedro, and I cast it back into your teeth! . . . Strike a helpless prisoner? Do so, and you add but another black deed to the long score that stands against the name of Spaniard. Some day the reckoning will come, señor—I dare stake my soul on that! . . . I'll not believe it; no! not upon your oath, Don Pedro! . . . Margaret, Margaret! Tell him he lies, dear lady! . . . In God's name, speak, sweetheart!" And though I knelt beside him, and called his name again and again, he was deaf to my voice and put me by with feeble hands,

crying ever: "Margaret! Margaret!" till I thought my heart would break.

Oh! the terror of this new jailer—dread Disease—that held him in its grip while Death lurked grimly in the background! For no wiles or blandishments of mine could move them or loose their hold upon the life most dear to me. When there was but man to deal with, my faith failed me and I ceased praying; now it was my punishment that only God's mercy could set my dear love free, —and it might be his pleasure to loose him in another world and leave me still on earth to mourn his loss.

As, hour after hour, I listened to his ravings, a deeper understanding of the horrors of his long captivity began to grow upon me. I could scarce forbear crying out when I thought how I had touched the hand of that vile Spaniard, and listened, smiling, when he spoke of love to me.

How terrible a thing is hatred! Heaven pardon me, but I think there is somewhat of it in my heart. Yet, now that the fever is abating, and my beloved is coming back to me from the very brink of the grave, I do pray that I may forgive mine enemy, even as God in His clemency has pardoned me!

* * * * * * *

He knows me at last. It was some hours ago. I was bending over him, and a light of recognition dawned in his eyes.

"Margaret! *Margaret!* is it *you?* I dreamed just now——that——that you were untrue to me!"

"Did you so, dear love?" I answered. "Forget it then, and rest; for now the fever and the dreams are past."

He smiled at me and fell asleep like a little child.

In the long hours that I have watched beside him I have written these last pages of my story; and some time, when he is awake and strong enough to bear the truth, I will put them all into his hand and leave him here alone. And I think, when he has read them through to the end, he will discern—between the lines—more of my heart than I have words to tell.

UNIVERSITY OF C/

This book i

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA
AT
LOS ANGELES
LIBRARY

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 930 676 2

PS
3505
C676m